

SUNDAY BASEBALL TIDBITS

MAY 2020

How are you with HR leaders by position, career plate appearances for current managers, Yankees AB career leaders? Stay safe out there.

Home Run Leaders by Position

Mike Piazza, who hit 427 career homers, is the only catcher in the 400-homer club. Bench came close, finishing with 389 career home runs.

1B leader Albert Pujols' 656 career homers are the sixth most in MLB history.

Jeff Kent leads all second basemen with 377 career homers, though Robinson Canó is only 53 off the pace.

Mike Schmidt clubbed all 548 of his home runs for the Phillies. Eddie Mathews (512) is the only other third baseman in the 500-homer club.

Cal Ripken Jr. clubbed 345 of his 431 career homers while playing shortstop, with the remaining 86 coming as a third baseman.

Barry Bonds not only leads all left fielders, but his 762 home runs are the most by any player in MLB history.

Center field is home to two of the top seven home run hitters of all-time, with Mays (660) sitting just ahead of Ken Griffey Jr. (630).

Hammerin' Hank's 755 home runs are the second most all-time -- but the most among right fielders.

David Ortiz (541 home runs) holds the largest lead at any position, with 232 more homers than any other DH in MLB history. Edgar Martinez is second with 309.

Wes Ferrell pitched 1927 to 1941 for the Indians, Senators, Yankees and Red Sox. He hit 38 career homers, one more than Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Lemon. Ferrell's 38 homers are also 10 more than his brother and batterymate, Rick, who hit just 28 home runs in his 18-year Hall of Fame career.

How Good was Lou Gehrig

Lou Gehrig triple crown 1934, Mickey Mantle triple crown 1956. Gehrig clubbed four home runs on June 3, 1932, against the Athletics. He remains the only player in Yankees history with a four-homer game.

Gehrig had three seasons with more than 170 RBIs, matching the total of every other player in MLB history ***combined***. Hack Wilson, Hank Greenberg and Jimmie Foxx each had one such season.

Gehrig hit four homers in a four-game sweep of the Cardinals in 1928. He also had 35 RBIs in 34 career World Series games, and he hit .361 in the Fall Classic compared to .340 in the regular season.

Only two players in MLB history with 450 HRs and 150 triples. Gehrig finished with 493 homers and 163 triples, while Stan Musial had 475 home runs and 177 three-baggers.

Served up Historic HRs

David Price served up Derek Jeter's 3,000 hit/HR in 2011.

Fernando Tatis is the only player in MLB history to hit two grand slams in the same game. He hit them both off Chan Ho Park of the Dodgers. Park pitched 2 2/3 innings, gave up 11 runs but only 6 of the runs were earned.

Mike Torrez of the Red Sox gave up Bucky Dent's game winning HR in 1978 AL playoff game 163.

1974 Al Downing of the Dodgers gave up Hank Aaron's 714 HR to pass Babe Ruth.

1961 Tracy Stallard of the Red Sox gave up Roger Maris's 61st HR

Steve Trachsel of the Cubs gave up Mark McGwire's 62nd HR in 1998. McGwire finished with 70 homers in 1998, while fellow slugger Sammy Sosa hit 66.

Streaks

Here are the longest hitting streaks of the 2010s.

1. Dan Uggla, 2011, 33 games
2. Whit Merrifield, 2018-19, 31 games
3. Freddie Freeman, 2016, 30 games
Andre Ethier, 2011, 30 games
4. Jackie Bradley Jr., 2016, 29 games
Denard Span, 2013, 29 games

Joe DiMaggio almost lost the streak several times. In all, he got just one hit in an astonishing 34 of his 56 games. He went 1-for-5 six times. During one 17-game stretch, he had 14 one-hit games.

Here are the 57 streaks of 30 games or more

1. Joe DiMaggio, New York Yankees: 56 games, 1941.
2. Willie Keeler, Baltimore Orioles (NL): 45 games, 1896-97.
3. Pete Rose, Cincinnati Reds: 44 games, 1978.
4. Bill Dahlen, Chicago Cubs: 42 games, 1894.
5. George Sisler, St. Louis Browns: 41 games, 1922.
6. Ty Cobb, Detroit Tigers: 40 games, 1911.
7. Paul Molitor, Milwaukee Brewers (AL): 39 games, 1987.
8. Jimmy Rollins, Philadelphia Phillies: 38 games, 2005-06.
9. Tommy Holmes, Boston Braves: 37 games, 1945.
10. Gene DeMontreville, Washington Senators (NL): 36 games, 1896-97.
- T11. Fred Clarke, Louisville Colonels (NL): 35 games, 1895.
- T11. Ty Cobb, Detroit Tigers: 35 games, 1917.
- T11. George Sisler, St. Louis Browns: 35 games, 1924-25.
- T11. Luis Castillo, Florida Marlins: 35 games, 2002
- T11. Chase Utley, Philadelphia Phillies: 35 games, 2006.
- T16. George McQuinn, St. Louis Browns: 34 games, 1938.
- T16. Dom DiMaggio, Boston Red Sox: 34 games, 1949.
- T16. Benito Santiago, San Diego Padres: 34 games, 1987.

T19. George Davis, New York Giants: 33 games, 1893.
T19. Hal Chase, New York Highlanders: 33 games, 1907.
T19. Rogers Hornsby, St. Louis Cardinals: 33 games, 1922.
T19. Heinie Manush, Washington Senators: 33 games, 1933.
T19. Dan Uggla, Atlanta Braves: 33 games, 2011.
T24. Harry Heilmann, Detroit Tigers: 32 games, 1922-23.
T24. Hal Morris, Cincinnati Reds: 32 games, 1996-97.
T26. Jimmy Wolf, Louisville Colonels (AA): 31 games, 1885-86
T26. Ed Delahanty, Philadelphia Phillies: 31 games, 1899.
T26. Nap Lajoie, Cleveland Naps: 31 games, 1906.
T26. Sam Rice, Washington Senators : 31 games, 1924.
T26. Vada Pinson: Cincinnati Reds: 31 games, 1965-66.
T26. Willie Davis, Los Angeles Dodgers: 31 games, 1969.
T26. Rico Carty, Atlanta Braves: 31 games, 1970.
T26. Ron LeFlore, Chicago White Sox: 31 games, 1975-76.
T26. Ken Landreaux, Minnesota Twins: 31 games, 1980.
T26. Vladimir Guerrero, Montreal Expos: 31 games, 1999.
T26. Whit Merrifield, Kansas City Royals: 31 games, Sept. 10, 2018-19.
T37. Cal McVey, Chicago White Stockings (NL): 30 games, 1876.
T37. Dusty Miller, Cincinnati Reds: 30 games, 1895-96.
T37. Elmer Smith, Cincinnati Reds: 30 games, 1898.
T37. Tris Speaker, Boston Red Sox: 30 games, 1912.
T37. Charlie Grimm, Pittsburgh Pirates: 30 games, 1922-23.
T37. Lance Richbourg, Boston Braves: 30 games, 1927-28.
T37. Sam Rice, Washington Senators: 30 games, 1929-30.
T37. Goose Goslin, Detroit Tigers: 30 games, 1934.
T37. Stan Musial, St. Louis Cardinals: 30 games, 1950.
T37. George Brett, Kansas City Royals: 30 games, 1980.
T37. Jerome Walton, Chicago Cubs: 30 games, 1989.
T37. Sandy Alomar Jr., Cleveland Indians: 30 games, 1997.
T37. Nomar Garciaparra, Boston Red Sox: 30 games, 1997.
T37. Eric Davis, Baltimore Orioles: 30 games, 1998.
T37. Luis Gonzalez, Arizona Diamondbacks: 30 games, 1999.
T37. Albert Pujols, St. Louis Cardinals: 30 games, 2003.
T37. Willy Taveras, Houston Astros (NL): 30 games, 2006.
T37. Moises Alou, New York Mets: 30 games, 2007.
T37. Ryan Zimmerman, Washington Nationals: 30 games, 2009.
T37. Andre Ethier, Los Angeles Dodgers, 30 games, 2011.
T37. Freddie Freeman, Atlanta Braves, 30 games, 2016.

I don't remember that.

Mike Schmidt played 157 games at 1B. Willie Mays 83, Wade Boggs 67.

Tim Lincecum played 53 games at 2B.

Jim Thome played 492 games at 3B.

Chipper Jones played 356 games in LF. Carlton Fisk 41.

Gary Carter played 132 games in RF. Johnny Bench 55.

Goose Goslin and Rollie Fingers each started 37 games, Mariano Rivera started 10.

Sandy Koufax had 83 relief appearances, Pedro Martinez 67.

Randy Johnson won his 300th game for the Giants.

Pedro Martinez recorded his 3,000 strikeout for the Mets.

Frank Thomas hit his 500th HR for the Blue Jays.

Gary Sheffield hit his 500th HR for the Mets.

Jim Thome hit his 500th HR for the White Sox.

Ricky Henderson played for 9 teams. He got his 3,000 hit with the Padres.

Ichiro Suzuki got his 3,000th hit for the Marlins.

Managers

7 current managers did not play in the majors: Orioles' [Brandon Hyde](#), the Angels' [Joe Maddon](#), the Braves' [Brian Snitker](#), the Mets' [Luis Rojas](#), the Cardinals' Mike Shildt, the Pirates' Derek Shelton and the Padres' Jayce Tingler.

Dusty Baker of the Astros leads all active managers with 8,021 career plate appearances. How would you do in ranking the others:

Don Mattingly, Marlins	7,721
Dave Martinez, Nationals	5,795
Craig Counsell, Brewers	5,484
David Bell, Reds	5,380
Joe Girardi, Phillies	4,535
Aaron Boone, Yankees	4,333
Mike Matheny , Royals	4,287
Dave Roberts, Dodgers	3,092
David Ross, Cubs	2,644
Bob Melvin , Athletics	2,095
Rocco Baldelli, Twins	2,065
Chris Woodward , Rangers	1,986
Terry Francona , Indians	1,826
Ron Roenicke , Red Sox	1,294
Torey Lovullo , Diamondbacks	837
Ron Gardenhire , Tigers	777
Kevin Cash , Rays	714
Rick Renteria , White Sox	456
Bud Black, Rockies	210 (and 121 wins as a pitcher)
Charlie Montoyo , Blue Jays	5

Yankee Career At Bat Leaders – 25 with more than 5,000 AB as Yankees

1.	Derek Jeter	11195
2.	Mickey Mantle	8102
3.	Lou Gehrig	8001
4.	Bernie Williams	7869
5.	Yogi Berra	7546
6.	Babe Ruth	7217
7.	Don Mattingly	7003
8.	Joe DiMaggio	6821
9.	Roy White	6650
10.	Willie Randolph	6303
11.	Bill Dickey	6300
12.	Frank Crosetti	6277
13.	Tony Lazzeri	6094
14.	Jorge Posada	6092
15.	Phil Rizzuto	5816
16.	Earle Combs	5746
17.	Wally Pipp	5594
18.	Alex Rodriguez	5577
19.	Graig Nettles	5519
20.	Bobby Richardson	5386
21.	Thurman Munson	5344
22.	Robinson Cano	5336
23.	Brett Gardner	5220

- | | |
|-------------------|------|
| 24. Elston Howard | 5044 |
| 25. Bob Meusel | 5032 |

More Tidbits

Salary scale for MLB umpires is \$122k to \$450k. Highest paid AAA umps get \$20k plus travel expenses. There are 76 MLB umps.

Of the 1,020 players with 5,000 or more plate appearances, almost exactly half of them (509 of them) averaged at least one hit per game.

The Dodgers and Giants have played more than 2,500 games throughout their illustrious rivalry. The Giants lead the series 1,256-1,233-17

Dennis Martinez (245), Frank Tanana (240), Tim Hudson (222) had more career wins than Pedro Martinez (219) and Orel Hershisier (204).

Greg Maddux was the first pitcher to win four straight Cy Young Awards, doing so from 1992-95. Randy Johnson became the second pitcher to win four consecutive Cy Young Awards from 1999-2002.

No AL pitcher has won consecutive Cy Young Awards since Pedro Martinez in 1999 and 2000. Five players have won consecutive NL Cy Young Awards during that span. ([Jacob deGrom](#) 2018-19, [Max Scherzer](#) 2016-17, [Clayton Kershaw](#) 2013-14, [Tim Lincecum](#) 2008-09, [Randy Johnson](#) 1999-2002

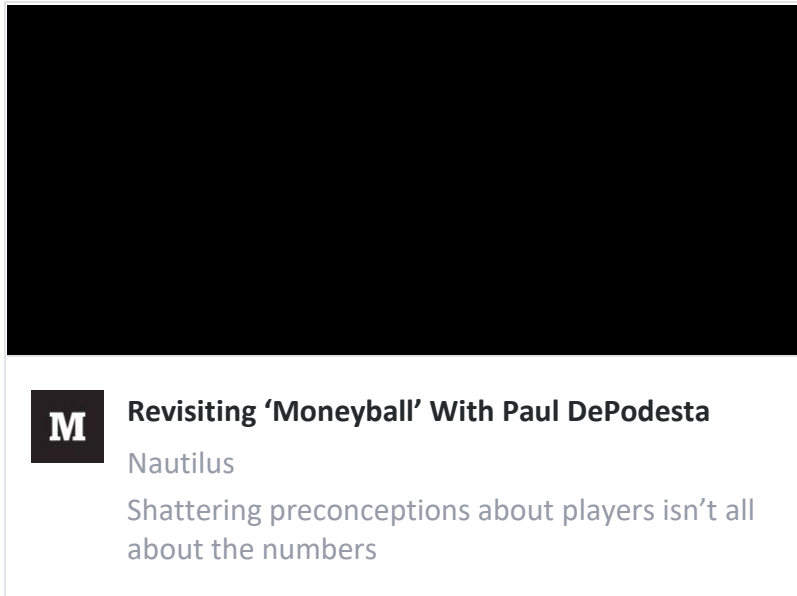
Three active players have won multiple MVP awards. Mike Trout and Albert Pujols have each won three MVP Awards, while Miguel Cabrera has won two.

Brooks Robinson won 16 Gold Glove Awards at third base, three more than any other position player in MLB history.

Good Read

Moneyball interview.

[Revisiting 'Moneyball' With Paul DePodesta](#)



A busy week for reader feedback. Why not highlight Ted Williams? Give a shout out to Matt Stairs. Jeff Kent should be in the HOF. Robinson Cano is a lock for the HOF. Jorge Posada deserves to be in the HOF. Usually with supporting arguments, sometimes with comparison stats. A thank you for recommending **Battered Bastards of Baseball** on Netflix. What interesting baseball debates and discussions did you have this week? Stay safe out there.

Do you remember?

Kenny Lofton played for the Yankees in 2004. In 83 games he hit .275 and homered in the 2004 ALCS against Boston.

John Mayberry played 1B for the Yankees in 1982. He hit .209 with 8 HRs.

Gaylord Perry Pitched for the Yankees in 1980, went 4-4 at age 41. That year the Yankees rotation also included Tommy John (age 37), Luis Tiant (39), Rudy May (36). Tom Underwood and Ron Guidry saw plenty of action too but some serious old starters for a team that won 103 games and the division title.

2010-2019

Most HRs 2010-2019—Nelson Cruz hit 346 homers over the past decade, 11 more than Edwin Encarnación.

Albert Pujols drove in 963 runs over the past decade, narrowly edging out Cruz (961) and Encarnación (956).

Robinson Canó paced all players last decade with 1,695 hits,

Dee Gordon, who didn't make his debut until 2011 (and didn't play more than 100 games in a season until '14), led all players with 330 stolen bases last decade

Matt Scherzer (161 wins) beating out Justin Verlander (160) by a single victory. Clayton Kershaw (156) and Zack Greinke (155)

Scherzer paced all pitchers with 2,452 strikeouts over the last decade, bringing his career total to 2,692.

Craig Kimbrel led all players with 346 saves over the last decade, while Kenley Jansen (301) was the only other pitcher with at least 300.

Mike Trout scored the most runs in the decade with 903 runs, 24 more than Ian Kinsler.

The Big Bucks

I remember when Mickey Mantle and Willie Mays were paid \$100K and it was a huge deal.

Today there are 64 players who make \$100K per game – whether they play that day or not. Looking over the list there are a few that ownership must be saying “what were we thinking?”

Rank/Player/Team/Position/Salary/Length/Years/Per Game/Average Per Year

1	Max Scherzer	WSH	SP	\$42,142,857	7	(2015-21)	\$210,000,000	\$30,000,000
2	Stephen Strasburg	WSH	SP	\$36,428,571	7	(2017-23)	\$175,000,000	\$25,000,000
3	Mike Trout	LAA	CF	\$34,083,333	6	(2015-20)	\$144,500,000	\$24,083,333
4	Zack Greinke	ARI	SP	\$32,421,884	6	(2016-21)	\$206,500,000	\$34,416,667
5	David Price	BOS	SP	\$31,000,000	7	(2016-22)	\$217,000,000	\$31,000,000
5	Clayton Kershaw	LAD	SP	\$31,000,000	3	(2019-21)	\$93,000,000	\$31,000,000
7	Miguel Cabrera	DET	DH	\$30,000,000	10	(2014-23)	\$292,000,000	\$29,200,000
8	Yoenis Cespedes	NYM	OF	\$29,000,000	4	(2017-20)	\$110,000,000	\$27,500,000
9	Justin Verlander	HOU	SP	\$28,000,000	7	(2013-19)	\$180,000,000	\$25,714,286
9	Albert Pujols	LAA	DH	\$28,000,000	10	(2012-21)	\$240,000,000	\$24,000,000
11	Felix Hernandez	SEA	SP	\$27,857,143	7	(2013-19)	\$175,000,000	\$25,000,000
12	Jon Lester	CHC	SP	\$27,500,000	6	(2015-20)	\$155,000,000	\$25,833,333
13	Nolan Arenado	COL	3B	\$26,000,000	1	(2019)	\$26,000,000	\$26,000,000
13	Giancarlo Stanton	NYY	RF	\$26,000,000	13	(2015-27)	\$325,000,000	\$25,000,000
15	Jake Arrieta	PHI	SP	\$25,000,000	3	(2018-20)	\$75,000,000	\$25,000,000
15	Joey Votto	CIN	1B	\$25,000,000	10	(2014-23)	\$225,000,000	\$22,500,000
15	Jordan Zimmermann	DET	SP	\$25,000,000	5	(2016-20)	\$110,000,000	\$22,000,000
18	Robinson Cano	NYM	2B	\$24,000,000	10	(2014-23)	\$240,000,000	\$24,000,000
19	J.D. Martinez	BOS	OF	\$23,750,000	5	(2018-22)	\$110,000,000	\$22,000,000
20	Edwin Encarnacion	SEA	1B	\$23,333,333	3	(2017-19)	\$60,000,000	\$20,000,000
21	Josh Donaldson	ATL	3B	\$23,000,000	1	(2019)	\$23,000,000	\$23,000,000
22	Johnny Cueto	SF	SP	\$22,666,666	6	(2016-21)	\$130,000,000	\$21,666,667
23	Buster Posey	SF	C	\$22,511,111	9	(2013-21)	\$167,000,000	\$18,555,556
24	Masahiro Tanaka	NYY	SP	\$22,000,000	7	(2014-20)	\$155,000,000	\$22,142,857
25	Jacoby Ellsbury	NYY	OF	\$21,857,142	7	(2014-20)	\$153,000,000	\$21,857,143
26	Eric Hosmer	SD	1B	\$21,625,000	8	(2018-25)	\$144,000,000	\$18,000,000
27	Charlie Blackmon	COL	CF	\$21,516,666	6	(2018-23)	\$108,000,000	\$18,000,000
28	Matt Kemp	CIN	OF	\$21,500,000	8	(2012-19)	\$160,000,000	\$20,000,000
29	Freddie Freeman	ATL	1B	\$21,359,375	8	(2014-21)	\$135,000,000	\$16,875,000

30 Rick Porcello	BOS	SP	\$21,125,000	4 (2016-19)	\$82,500,000	\$20,625,000
31 Chris Davis	BAL	1B	\$21,116,517	7 (2016-22)	\$161,000,000	\$23,000,000
32 Alex Gordon	KC	LF	\$21,000,000	4 (2016-19)	\$72,000,000	\$18,000,000
32 Shin-Soo Choo	TEX	DH	\$21,000,000	7 (2014-20)	\$130,000,000	\$18,571,429
34 Carlos Santana	CLE	1B	\$20,500,000	3 (2018-20)	\$60,000,000	\$20,000,000
35 Yu Darvish	CHC	SP	\$20,000,000	6 (2018-23)	\$126,000,000	\$21,000,000
35 Cole Hamels	CHC	SP	\$20,000,000	1 (2019)	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
35 Mookie Betts	BOS	RF	\$20,000,000	1 (2019)	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
35 Russell Martin	LAD	C	\$20,000,000	1 (2019)	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
35 Yadier Molina	STL	C	\$20,000,000	3 (2018-20)	\$60,000,000	\$20,000,000
35 Jason Heyward	CHC	RF	\$20,000,000	8 (2016-23)	\$184,000,000	\$23,000,000
41 Jeff Samardzija	SF	SP	\$19,800,000	5 (2016-20)	\$90,000,000	\$18,000,000
42 Wei-Yin Chen	MIA	RP	\$19,773,520	5 (2016-20)	\$80,000,000	\$16,000,000
43 Justin Upton	LAA	LF	\$19,700,000	5 (2018-22)	\$106,000,000	\$21,200,000
44 Kyle Seager	SEA	3B	\$19,500,000	7 (2015-21)	\$100,000,000	\$14,285,714
45 Justin Turner	LAD	3B	\$19,000,000	4 (2017-20)	\$64,000,000	\$16,000,000
45 Mark Melancon	SF	RP	\$19,000,000	4 (2017-20)	\$62,000,000	\$15,500,000
47 Kenley Jansen	LAD	RP	\$18,800,000	5 (2017-21)	\$80,000,000	\$16,000,000
47 Anthony Rendon	WSH	3B	\$18,800,000	1 (2019)	\$18,800,000	\$18,800,000
49 Rich Hill	LAD	SP	\$18,666,667	3 (2017-19)	\$48,000,000	\$16,000,000
50 Pablo Sandoval	SF	3B	\$18,600,000	5 (2015-19)	\$95,000,000	\$19,000,000
51 Ryan Zimmerman	WSH	1B	\$18,333,333	6 (2014-19)	\$100,000,000	\$16,666,667
51 Wade Davis	COL	RP	\$18,333,333	3 (2018-20)	\$52,000,000	\$17,333,333
53 Yasmani Grandal	MIL	C	\$18,250,000	1 (2019)	\$18,250,000	\$18,250,000
54 Ryan Braun	MIL	LF	\$18,158,038	13 (2008-20)	\$150,000,000	\$11,538,462
55 Hyun-Jin Ryu	LAD	SP	\$17,900,000	1 (2019)	\$17,900,000	\$17,900,000
56 Brandon Belt	SF	1B	\$17,200,000	5 (2017-21)	\$72,800,000	\$14,560,000
56 Aroldis Chapman	NYY	RP	\$17,200,000	5 (2017-21)	\$86,000,000	\$17,200,000
56 Corey Kluber	CLE	SP	\$17,200,000	5 (2015-19)	\$38,500,000	\$7,700,000
59 Mike Leake	SEA	SP	\$17,000,000	5 (2016-20)	\$80,000,000	\$16,000,000
59 Nathan Eovaldi	BOS	SP	\$17,000,000	4 (2019-22)	\$68,000,000	\$17,000,000
59 J.A. Happ	NYY	SP	\$17,000,000	2 (2019-20)	\$34,000,000	\$17,000,000
62 Ian Kennedy	KC	SP	\$16,500,000	5 (2016-20)	\$70,000,000	\$14,000,000
62 Khris Davis	OAK	DH	\$16,500,000	1 (2019)	\$16,500,000	\$16,500,000
	STL					
62 Dexter Fowler		RF	\$16,500,000	5 (2017-21)	\$82,500,000	\$16,500,000

Ted Williams

One reader commented that I haven't given Ted Williams proper credit. Not a bad career—here you go.

1939 to 1960 (including two breaks for military service).

521 HRs including leading AL in 1941, 1942, 1948 and 1949.

Led majors in RBIs three times including 1949 with 159.

Career .344 hitter. Six batting titles including .406 in 1941. 13 years in top ten.

19 All Star games.

Twice AL MVP, finished in top 5 voting 9 times.

.482 career on base percentage is best all time. (he had .553 OBP in 1941).

9 times led AL in slugging percentage, 13 years in the top ten, 2nd all-time at .634.

8 times led AL in times on base, 13 years in the top ten.

6 times led AL in AB per HR, 12 years in the top ten.

5 times led AL in extra base hits, 14 years in the top ten.

2 time Triple Crown winner, 1942 and 1947.

In 1949 reached base in 84 straight games, all-time record.

Pinch Hits all time leaders

Len Harris had 212 pinch hits for 8 teams 1988-2005. He is also all-time leader in pinch AB with 804.

Matt Stairs hit 23 pinch HRs (Cliff Johnson is second with 20).

Ed Kranepool in 1974 for the Mets hit .487 as a pinch hitter.

In 2017 Ichiro Suzuki pinch hit in 109 games for the Marlins.

More Tidbits

From the trivial but interesting file, in 1955 Willie Mays led the NL in home runs and triples and Mickey Mantle did the same in the AL. Jim Rice of the 1978 Red Sox is the only player since to lead either league in both categories in the same year.

December 9, 1982. Yankees traded Fred McGriff, Mike Morgan, Dave Collins and cash to Toronto for Tom Dodd and Dale Murray. Dodd didn't play an inning for the Yankees but he did have 13 career at bats with the Orioles. Murray relieved in 59 games over two seasons for New York, going 3-6 with 1 save. McGriff went on to hit 493 HRs and Morgan won 132 games over the next 19 seasons.

Cal Ripken Jr. set the MLB record by playing in 2,632 consecutive games. Steve Garvey holds the NL record at 1,207 games.

Four Great Baseball Reads to Help Get You Through Quarantine (all available on Amazon—they'll bring a truck to your house)

I have talked about each of these at times in the past. I promise they won't disappoint.

K by Tyler Kepner. The history of baseball told through different pitches.

The Cooperstown Casebook by Jay Jaffe. Who should be in? Who is in who shouldn't be?

Veeck as in Wreck by Bill Veeck. Autobiography of an amazing baseball owner in an amazing time.

Bill Veeck, Baseball's Greatest Maverick by Paul Dickson. More Bill Veeck, more great stuff.

CORRECTION REPEAT

Repeat of correction on the Lou Gehrig item from last week--my source was incorrect and I didn't cross check it (my bad).

Gehrig was the first in the modern era to hit 4 HRs in a game but not the other three items. Apologies.

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

5/17/2020

Besides following the discouraging battle between MLB and the Union over compensation (billionaires arguing with millionaires is not a good look) there were some good baseball reads this week.

This week's sources include:

Baseballreference.com

MLBtraderumours.com

TheAthletic.com

Pinstripealley.com

mlb.com

Visn.com (Vegas sports and Information Network)

Hit Leaders by Position

Must have played at least two-thirds of his games at a position in order to qualify as its leader. Any player who played at least two-thirds of his career in the outfield (regardless of the specific outfield position) qualified in the outfield spot at which he played the most. This is for the Modern Era (since 1900) only.

Catcher: [Ivan Rodriguez](#), 2,844

While Mike Piazza holds the lead in the home run department among catchers, Rodriguez is the hit king at the position with 2,844, ahead of Ted Simmons (2,472), Carlton Fisk (2,356), Jason Kendall (2,195) and Yogi Berra (2,150). Piazza ranks sixth with 2,127 hits. Pudge collected the majority of his hits with the Rangers from 1991-2002, a span in which he made 10 All-Star teams, won 10 Gold Glove Awards and earned the '99 American League MVP Award.

Active leader: Yadier Molina, 1,963

First base: [Eddie Murray](#), 3,255

Murray is one of six players in history with 500-plus home runs and at least 3,000 hits, along with Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Rafael Palmeiro, Alex Rodriguez and Albert Pujols, who is just 54 hits away from overtaking Murray for the first-base lead. Murray never tallied 200 hits in a season, but he had 170 or more 12 times en route to 3,255 hits in his career.

Active leader: Pujols, 3,202

Second base: [Eddie Collins](#), 3,315

One of the top hitters of the Dead Ball Era, Collins posted a .333 average while notching 3,315 hits in his 25-year career. Collins was the sixth member of the 3,000-hit club, joining a couple of weeks after Tris Speaker in 1925. He's one of three second basemen in the club, along with Nap Lajoie and Craig Biggio.

Active leader: Robinson Canó, 2,570

Third base: [Adrián Beltré](#), 3,166

With a double on July 30, 2017, Beltré became the 31st member of the 3,000-hit club. Two weeks later, he passed Wade Boggs for the all-time lead among third basemen with his 3,011th career knock. In his 21-year career, which he finished with 3,166 hits, 477 homers and five Gold Glove Awards, Beltré made only eight appearances at a defensive position other than third base.

Active leader: Ryan Zimmerman, 1,784

Shortstop: [Derek Jeter](#), 3,465

Jeter, who was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2020, ranks seventh all time in hits with 3,465, edging Honus Wagner (3,420) and Cal Ripken Jr. (3,184) for the positional lead. The longtime Yankees captain notched eight seasons with 200-plus hits, leading MLB in 1999 (219) and 2012 (216). A five-time World Series champion, Jeter also had 200 hits in the postseason, 72 more than any other player.

Active leader: Elvis Andrus, 1,723

Left field: [Stan Musial](#), 3,630

Musial played more than two-thirds of his games in the outfield, and made more appearances in left field than right or center, so he qualifies here. The three-time NL MVP Award winner racked up 3,630 hits, giving him a sizable advantage over Rickey Henderson (3,055) for the left-field lead. Musial had a career-high 230 knocks with a 1.152 OPS in 1948, one of six times he paced the league in hits.

Active leader: Melky Cabrera, 1,962

Center field: [Ty Cobb](#), 4,189

Cobb and Pete Rose are the only two players in history with more than 4,000 hits, and Cobb leads all center fielders with 4,189. The Georgia Peach posted an astonishing .366 average in his career, collecting 200-plus hits in nine seasons. Cobb won the Chalmers Award -- an early version of the MVP -- in 1911 after hitting .419 with 248 knocks and 83 stolen bases.

Active leader: Matt Kemp, 1,780

Right field: [Hank Aaron](#), 3,771

Hammerin' Hank is the first player on this list who also leads his position in home runs. Aaron not only ranks second among all players in homers (755) but also third in hits (3,771) and first in RBIs (2,297). Six other right fielders -- Paul Waner, Tony Gwynn, Dave Winfield, Ichiro Suzuki, Al Kaline and Roberto Clemente -- had more than 3,000 hits, but none is close to Aaron.

Active leader: Nick Markakis, 2,355

Designated hitters: [David Ortiz](#), 2,472

Ortiz leads all designated hitters in homers with 541 and also has the advantage in hits, though this category is much closer than the first. Hall of Famer Edgar Martinez amassed 2,247 hits, while Big Papi finished with 2,472. Harold Baines has more (2,866) than Ortiz, but he played 58% of his games at designated hitter, falling short of the two-thirds threshold.

Active leader: Shohei Ohtani, 203

Pitcher: [Walter Johnson](#), 547

Part of the inaugural Hall of Fame class alongside Cobb, Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner and Christy Mathewson, Johnson ranks second all-time in wins (417) and bWAR (164.5), first in shutouts (110), ninth in strikeouts (3,509) and 12th in ERA (2.17). The Big Train was also a capable batsman, tallying 547 hits with 24 homers in 2,324 at-bats.

Active leader: Adam Wainwright, 136

Betting Trends

Interleague play first began in 1997 and has expanded through the years. Last season, each team played 20 interleague games. From 2005 to 2017, it was death, taxes and the American League dominating interleague play (1,930-1,586, 54.9% according to Bet Labs Sports).

However, we've seen a shift over the past two seasons with National League teams going 323-276 (53.9%) against American League teams.

With NL teams adopting the DH for 2020 and the new geographic-based divisions (in which the AL East and NL East will be one big division), it will be interesting to see if the NL teams will be strengthened and continue to be a smart bet against AL opponents in this shortened season.

The universal DH could also lead to an increase in scoring because instead of a light hitting pitching hitting for half of the teams in the league, it will instead be a stronger position player taking up the at bats. It's also important to note that the new 3-batter rule will take affect this year. This means relief pitchers must face at least 3-hitters. The managers can't just pull them after one hitter and play specialized lefty vs lefty matchups. This is another advantage for hitters, which could lead to more scoring.

Since 2005, unders have been a slightly smarter bet than overs in MLB. They've cashed 50.8% of the time compared to overs hitting 49.2%. This is due in large part to the fact that public bettors love betting overs (because they want to root for a high scoring, entertaining game). Sportsbooks know this and will shade numbers higher toward the over, causing recreational bettors to take bad numbers and creating more value for savvy contrarian wiseguys to sweat inflated unders.

However, we saw an uptick in overs last season due to the juiced ball, with overs cashing at a 49.9% clip, up 0.07% from their historical average. The key last year was focusing on totals of 8 or less. In those games, the over cashed at a 54.9% rate. If the total was 8.5 or higher, the over only hit at a 48.4% clip.

The ones that got away

Michael Young, Texas Rangers career leader in all-time leader in games, at-bats, runs, hits, doubles and triples. But the seven-time All-Star started with Toronto, traded July 2000 from the Jays for Esteban Loaiza.

In 1963 the Twins left Reggie Smith unprotected and he was drafted by the Red Sox.

In 1968, with Sal Bando locked in at 3B, the A's left Darrell Evans unprotected and the Braves drafted him. Evans hit 414 career HRs.

The Cubs traded minor leaguer Josh Donaldson to Oakland in 2008. Fast forward to 2013 and he was AL MVP.

The Reds left Trevor Hoffman unprotected in the 1992 expansion draft. The Marlins flipped him to the Padres. 601 saves later...

Roberto Clemente was a rule 5 draft pick from the Dodgers.

MLB Top Draft Picks 2000-2009

Drafting baseball players is tricky. There are plenty of hits and misses by people who do this for a living.

2000 Marlins take Adrian Gonzalez. They traded him to the Rangers in 2003. He wound up playing 15 years with 317 HRs.

2001 Twins take Joe Maurer, possible HOF catcher.

2002 Pirates pick Bryan Bullington. He pitches a total of 18 innings for them. Zack Grenke would have been a better choice, picked five spots later.

2003 Rays take Delmon Young who bounced around the majors from 2006 to 2015.

2004 Padres pick Matt Bush, passing on number two pick Justin Verlander.

2005 Diamondbacks pick Justin Upton. Upton is still in the majors with a better than average career .267 with 298 HRs and 147 steals. Arizona did pass on [Alex Gordon](#), [Ryan Zimmerman](#), [Ryan Braun](#), [Ricky Romero](#), [Troy Tulowitzki](#), [Andrew McCutchen](#) and [Jay Bruce](#) were among the top 12 picks in that year's draft. All eight of those players went on to make at least one All-Star team (four in Upton's case).

2006 Royals pick RHP Luke Hochevar who has had a mediocre career. Kansas City passed on [Evan Longoria](#) (No. 3), [Andrew Miller](#) (No. 6), [Clayton Kershaw](#) (No. 7), [Tim Lincecum](#) (No. 10) and [Max Scherzer](#) (No. 11).

2007 Rays pick David Price. Four All-Star games and a Cy Young.

2008 Rays pick Tim Beckham, a career .249 hitter. Tampa passed on Buster Posey and Eric Hosmer.

2009 Nationals pick Stephen Strasburg.

This is a hit-and-miss group. Five players became major league standouts, while the other half disappointed. Who's the best of the bunch? It's hard to go against Strasburg in the wake of his playoff heroics, but Gonzalez and Mauer had outstanding careers, and Upton and Price have been far above average as well.

Pitching hitless streaks

116 years ago, Cy Young gave up his first base hit in over two weeks, snapping a streak of 24 consecutive hitless innings that, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, remains unchallenged as the Major League record.

You read that correctly: Young went *24 straight innings* -- or nearly the span of three complete games -- without permitting a single base knock. Here's how Elias breaks it down:

- On April 25, 1904, Young allowed his last hit to the leadoff batter in the sixth inning, and then did not allow a hit in the seventh and eighth frames of a 2-0 loss to Philadelphia, starting him off with two complete hitless innings.
- Five days later, Young came on for seven hitless innings of relief, earning a modern-day save (though it wasn't called that at the time) in a 4-1 win over Washington.
- Five days after that, Young tormented Philadelphia again, this time twirling the first perfect game in American League history.
- And finally, on May 11, Young had no-hit stuff again until Detroit's Sam Crawford finally reached on a seventh-inning double, snapping Young's record streak at 24. How did Young react? Merely by shrugging that off and going *15 innings* for a hard-fought 1-0 win. There's a reason baseball's highest pitching honor is named after him.

Who has come closest since 1961 to that run?

1) [Dennis Eckersley](#), Indians: 21 consecutive hitless innings

Dates: May 25 - June 3, 1977 Cleveland's third-year righty channeled Young and the pitchers of yesteryear in a 12-inning complete-game win over the Mariners on May 25, holding Seattle hitless for the last seven frames of the ballgame. Eckersley returned to the Cleveland Stadium

mound on May 30 and spun a no-hitter against the Angels, allowing only two baserunners via a walk and a dropped third strike. In his follow-up four days later at the Kingdome, Eckersley was channeling Vander Meer and on pace for back-to-back no-nos until Seattle's Ruppert Jones finally homered with two outs in the sixth inning.

2-T) [Max Scherzer](#), Nationals: 16 innings

Dates: June 14-26, 2015 The right-hander authored a 16-strikeout one-hitter on the road at Miller Park on June 14, allowing the lone single to Carlos Gomez in the bottom of the seventh. Then he hurled his first career no-hitter in his next start against the Pirates, coming one hit batsmen with two outs in the ninth away from a perfect game. Mad Max took another no-no bid into the sixth inning of his next start against the Phillies before Freddy Galvis doubled to finally end Scherzer's run. At one point across those three games, Scherzer had retired 70 of 73 batters faced, carrying a no-hitter into the sixth inning of each contest.

2-T) [Dwight Gooden](#), Yankees: 16 innings

Dates: May 8-14, 1996 On May 8, Gooden earned his first win with eight innings of two-run ball against Detroit, holding the Tigers hitless across his last seven frames. Then came May 14, the day Gooden became the headline story again when he no-hit the Mariners on a memorable night at Yankee Stadium.

2-T) [Mike Scott](#), Astros: 16 innings

Dates: Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 1986 Scott went on an absolute tear to close the regular season. He began by retiring the Padres in order to finish out a seven-inning win on Sept. 20, and then unleashed a 13-strikeout no-hitter against the Giants at the Astrodome to clinch the NL West division title for Houston.

2-T) **Steve Busby**, Royals: 16 innings

Dates: June 14-24, 1974 Busby went the distance in a win on June 14 in Detroit, retiring his last eight batters. Then he put himself into the record books in Milwaukee by authoring his second no-no in a span of 14 months while surrendering just one walk to the Brewers.

2-T) [Nolan Ryan](#), Angels: 16 innings

Dates: July 15-19, 1973 he put up a pair of no-hitters and set the modern single-season strikeout record with 383.

More Tidbits

Pitcher with the highest innings total in a single season since 2000 is Roy Halladay (266 innings in 2003)

On May 12 Yogi Berra would have turned 95 years old. The legendary Yankees catcher is the all-time leader in World Series hits (71). Micky Mantle is second with 59.

Tony Gwynn won four consecutive NL batting titles in 1994-'97. The last NL player to do that was Rogers Hornsby, STL (1920-'25).

George Brett won batting titles in three decades – only player to do it. (1976, 1980, 1990).

Barry Bonds was NL MVP in 1990, 1992, 1993. Terry Pendleton of the Atlanta Braves was NL MVP in 1991. He lead the league at .319, 187 hits.

Kevin Kiermaier of the Rays and Cody Bellinger of the Dodgers are the fastest active runners from home to 1B, 3.97 seconds average. Brett Gardner of the Yankees is tied for 9th at 4.06.

May 12, six years ago--In his swan song with the Yankees, 38-year-old right fielder [Alfonso Soriano](#) became the seventh MLB player to collect 1,000 hits in both the National League and the American League. The milestone came on a single off [Mets](#) starter [Bartolo Colon](#), no stranger to feats of longevity himself.

The achievement placed Soriano in impressive company. Frank Robinson, Dave Winfield, [Vladimir Guerrero](#), Fred McGriff, [Orlando Cabrera](#), and [Carlos Lee](#) all pulled off the same trick. Soriano could also boast a unique accomplishment: he was the first player to record 100 home runs, 500 RBI, 500 runs, and 100 stolen bases in both the Junior and Senior Circuits.

Of his career 2,095 hits, a league-leading 209 of them came in the 2002 season for the Yankees. That same year, Soriano stole an AL-best 41 bags, earned a Silver Slugger Award, and made the first of seven All-Star appearances.

Ted Williams

Building on last week's summary of major Ted Williams accomplishments, most people know he hit .406 at age 22. But many do not realize he missed batting .400 again by just 5 hits at age 38.

[Dwight Evans \(1972-90\)](#) Won eight Gold Glove Awards, the most in Red Sox history. He hit 385 career HRs.

[Mel Ott \(1926-47\)](#)

Inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1951.

Signed by the Giants at 16 out of high school, Ott spent his entire 22-year career in New York, developing into a 12-time All-Star with a .304 career batting average, 488 doubles and 1,860 RBIs. The left-handed slugger led the NL in home runs six times and was the league's first player to reach 500. He finished with 511 homers, a then-NL record. Only Babe Ruth (714) and Jimmie Foxx (534) had a higher total at the time. Ott helped the Giants capture three NL pennants and crushed the series-clinching home run in Game 5 of the 1933 World Series against the Washington Senators. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1951.

From ESPN. A (long) fascinating piece on Don Mattingly's age:

https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29043681/cracking-birthday-mystery-don-mattingly-1987-topps-baseball-card

And finally, in tribute to Bob Watson who died this week as it appeared in NYDN in 2015.

Watson was the first player to hit for the cycle in both the National and American Leagues, doing it with Houston in 1977 and the Boston Red Sox in 1979. After playing for Houston and Boston He joined the Yankees as a free agent in 1980 and hit .307 with 13 home runs. The next year he hit a three-run homer off the Dodgers' Jerry Reuss in the first inning of Game 1 of the World Series, but Los Angeles went on to defeat the Yankees in six games. In 19 big league seasons Watson hit .295 with 184 HRs and 989 RBIs. In 17 career post season games he batted .371. Watson was later the first black GM in history with the Astros and was GM of the 1996 world champion Yankees.

Bob Watson and the story of Major League Baseball's One Millionth Run

The whole thing started with a baseball junkie counting runs on his new \$80 electronic calculator, which had eaten up about a week's take-home pay from his job as a radio newscaster in Connecticut.

It gained steam and became a big-deal promotion for Major League Baseball, with luminaries Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial and Ernie Banks talking it up. There was a countdown in every ballpark, a command center in Rockefeller Center and spotters on the telephone from every game, vital in the days before instant messaging and Twitter.

Companies such as Tootsie Roll and Seiko were sponsors.

And it ended in a home run sprint — yep, you read that right — with the run counter in every active ballpark sitting on 1.

Houston's Bob Watson stepped into quirky baseball history when he touched home plate at Candlestick Park.

Forty years ago today, on May 4, 1975, Watson scored what was then counted as the millionth run in baseball history, running in from second base on a three-run homer hit by Milt May, 99 years and 12 days after a fella named Wes Fisler of Philadelphia's National League club scored the first one in the history of the majors.

Halfway across the country, only a few moments after May swung, Davey Concepcion of the Reds homered and dashed around the bases at Riverfront Stadium.

"I got to third base and our bullpen was right behind third and the guys were saying, 'Run, run, run!'" recalls Watson, who had worked a walk against John Montefusco. "I think I beat Concepcion by like a second and a half."

"I was the million and one," Concepcion says, laughing. "I was flying around the bases, but I didn't have time to score before Bob. I think I missed by eight yards."

Still, Concepcion originally thought he had done it and, he says, he and the Reds celebrated at the plate. "Then somebody said I came up short," he laments now.

Just before those home run trots turned into sprints, both Chris Chambliss of the Yankees and the Twins' Rod Carew had a chance to score the millionth run, according to news reports. But both were thrown out at the plate.

There was much at stake besides just a slice of oddball lore — publicity, a Seiko watch worth \$1,000, a million Tootsie Rolls and a million pennies that would go to a baseball charity. There

was even a contest for fans to predict who would score and when; the winner would get the candy and the pennies, too.

Folks were curious, recalls Ellen Gordon, now the chairman and CEO of Tootsie Roll Industries, Inc., and the promotion generated lots of television and print coverage. "We got a lot of attention out of it and it just seemed to fit in with Tootsie Roll," Gordon says now.

DiMaggio drummed up support for Tootsie Roll's backing by uttering this much-reported phrase when someone wondered why the candy company was involved: "I ate my first Tootsie Roll when I was six."

And teams wanted one of their own to score the fateful run, too, says Marty Appel, the baseball author who was the Yankees' media relations director at the time. "We were hoping it was us," Appel says. "We weren't winning pennants then and it would've been a nice moment.

"I think there was a higher level of interest in it than you might expect. It somehow got people's interest."

There was, for instance, a countdown in the Daily News and stories speculating on how it'd be scored. One particular story in The News wondered whether players would try to steal home to do it. It was headlined: "Will Million Be a Steal?"

Little did a 23-year-old recent grad of Emerson College know what he got going. A few years earlier, Mark Sackler, who worked at WMMM in Westport, Conn., had used the Baseball Encyclopedia to tally how many runs had been scored in big-league history, just for nerdy fun. When he bought his first calculator in 1974 — "I just had to have it," Sackler recalls now — he revisited the project because he knew the game must be nearing one million runs.

One of his father's work colleagues knew someone in the promotions business, so a few connections later, Ted Worner Associates was involved and Sackler was part of a growing event. "It took a year to get it going," he says.

At one point, Sackler, who eventually left broadcasting to work in the pharmaceutical industry, was asked to project the day it would happen. "I came up with May 4," he said.

Watson, who would go on to hit .324 and make his second All-Star team in 1975, might not have had a chance at the milestone if not for a May 3 rainout that forced a Sunday doubleheader and an early start. Or if May hadn't seen the counter drop to 1 and decided, "I'm swinging."

"I was not a power hitter," says May, now the hitting coach for the Orioles' Gulf Coast League team who hit 77 homers in his 15-year career. "Maybe I should've had that approach more often."

The Baseball Hall of Fame collected the Candlestick plate and the spikes Watson scored with. Neither artifact is currently on display, a Hall spokesman said. One drawback, Watson recalls: he had just gotten his Kangaroo brand spikes properly broken in, something he says wasn't as easy to do then as it is now.

Watson did not accept the Tootsie Rolls, instead directing them to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. He did not want his 4-year-old son and 2-year-old daughter to have that much candy. But the watch, solid platinum, is still a prized souvenir of his terrific 19-year career.

"It's still in my safety deposit box," Watson says. "I've never worn it. It came in a nice wooden box with a plaque on it. I would never sell it — it's one of a kind. As far as I'm concerned, when I leave the planet, my son or daughter, whichever wants it, I hope they keep it."

Watson, now 69, went on to a long career in the game, including a stint as Yankees' GM when he became the first African-American GM to win a World Series title in 1996. He's now the vice president of the Baseball Assistance Team, the charity that helps former players.

Those involved in the millionth run can't help but be curious about the next million — MLB estimates it is approaching the 1.9 million mark and could reach 2 million in 2020.

But plenty of people still bring up the millionth run, Watson says.

"I'll hear, 'Hey, you won me a pitcher of beer' because someone stumped their friends," he says.

"It wasn't one of my goals as a player. It's just something along the way that is a unique happening. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

Stay safe out there.

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

Dates and Places

Athletics (Oakland Coliseum): Rickey Henderson breaks the all-time stolen base record
May 1, 1991

Mets (Citi Field): Johan Santana's no-hitter
June 1, 2012

Orioles (Camden Yards): Cal Ripken breaks Lou Gehrig's consecutive games record
Sept. 6, 1995

Cubs (Wrigley Field): Babe Ruth calls his shot
Oct. 1, 1932 (World Series Game 3)

Blue Jays (Rogers Centre): Joe Carter's World Series walk-off home run
Oct. 23, 1993 (Game 6 of World Series)

Decent Club

The '27 Yankees were just a steamroller. They swept the Pirates 5-4, 6-2, 8-1 and 4-3 in the World Series after a season in which they led the American League in runs scored, hits, triples, home runs, base on balls, batting average, slugging percentage and on-base percentage. They set the win record back then with 110 W's and finished 19 games out in front of second place. They had the second-best per-game run differential of all time. Ruth hit .356 and chipped in with 60 HRs. Gehrig hit .373 with 47 HRs and 175 RBIs. Coombs hit .356 with 23 triples. The 1927 Yankees would eventually send six players along with manager Miller Huggins and president Ed Barrow to the Baseball Hall of Fame--Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Waite Hoyt, Tony Lazzeri, Earle Combs, and Herb Pennock.

Connections

Fun exercise on mlb.com

Giancarlo Stanton homered off Jamie Moyer in 2012.

Moyer gave up a homer to Don Mattingly in 1993.

Mattingly homered off Tommy John in 1985.

Tommy John gave up a homer to Mickey Mantle in 1964.

Mickey Mantle homered off Bob Feller in 1956.

Feller gave up a homer to Lou Gehrig in 1937.

Stanton to Gehrig in 6 steps.

They had a ton of them, here's another

Adrian Beltre homered off Greg Maddux in 2007.

Maddux gave up a homer to Keith Hernandez in 1989.

Hernandez homered off Jerry Koosman in 1976.

Koosman gave up a homer to Willie Mays in 1967.

Mays homered off Howie Pollet in 1951.

Pollet gave up a homer to Mel Ott in 1942.

This list features 10 Hall of Famers (11 if you consider Trout to be a near-certain lock), 26 World Series titles (27 if you consider Old Hoss Radbourn's 1884 championship a World Series title), 11 MVP Awards, and every other honor conceivable.

Mike Trout homered off Ryan Dempster in 2012.

Dempster gave up a homer to Tony Gwynn in 1999.

Gwynn homered off Vida Blue in 1986.

Blue gave up a homer to Al Kaline in 1969.

Kaline homered off Virgil Trucks in 1955.

Trucks gave up a homer to Joe DiMaggio in 1946.

DiMaggio homered off Lefty Grove in 1937.

Grove gave up a homer to Babe Ruth in 1926.

Ruth homered off Walter Johnson in 1918.

Johnson gave up a homer to Sam Crawford in 1907.

Crawford homered off Cy Young in 1900.

Young gave up a homer to Cap Anson in 1896.

Anson homered off Old Hoss Radbourn in 1884.

Decade dividers are arbitrary but interesting.

Most HRs in the 1990's. Mark McGwire with 405, 23 ahead of Ken Griffey Jr.

Mark Grace has 1754 hits to lead the 1990's, beating out Raphael Palmeiro. (I guessed Tony Gwynn). Palmeiro played in the most games in the 90's, sitting out just 27 games in the ten years.

Greg Maddux won 176 games in the 90's, just ahead of Tom Glavine at 164.

Surprisingly John Wetteland led the 90's in saves with 295.

Have a Night

Fred Lynn, 6/28/1975 vs. Tigers 5-for-6 with three homers, a triple and 10 RBIs. 16 total bases.

YANKEES: Reggie Jackson -- October 18, 1977 (World Series Game 6) vs. Dodgers

Lou Gehrig claimed the only four-homer game in Yankees history, achieved on June 3, 1932, at Philadelphia's Shibe Park, a diamond where Tony Lazzeri slugged two grand slams and collected 11 RBIs a few years later on May 23, 1936. Yet when factoring in the stage and importance of the contest, "Mr. October" takes the prize for his epic performance in the clinching Game 6 of the 1977 World Series.

With the Yankees' 21st championship hanging in the balance, Jackson capped an eventful first season in pinstripes by belting three home runs off three different Dodgers hurlers, all on the first pitch. Jackson hit a fourth-inning homer off Burt Hooton, a fifth-inning shot off Elias Sosa and connected for an eighth-inning blast off Charlie Hough -- a shot that landed in Yankee Stadium's distant center-field batters' eye.

TIGERS Ty Cobb -- May 5, 1925 at St. Louis Browns His 6-for-6, three-homer game that Tuesday afternoon produced 16 total bases, scored four times and drove in five runs.

TWINS Kirby Puckett -- Aug. 30, 1987 at Brewers 6-for-6. 6 hits, 14 total bases, 2 HRs

In the previous night's game Puckett had gone 4-for-5, meaning that he tallied 10 hits in 11 at-bats (including four homers) in the span of less than 24 hours.

NATIONALS: Anthony Rendon -- April 30, 2017 vs. Mets Rendon became the first big league player to go 6-for-6, belt three home runs and record 10 RBIs.

PHILLIES: Mike Schmidt -- April 17, 1976 at Cubs He hit a two-run homer in the fifth, a solo homer in the seventh, a three-run homer in the eighth and a two-run homer in the 10th.

CUBS: Kris Bryant -- June 27, 2016 at Reds Bryant churned out five hits, including two doubles and three homers, scored four runs and collected six RBIs. 16 total bases in a game. There have only been 23 such games in recorded MLB history, tracing back to 1904, with greats like Ty Cobb, Lou Gehrig, Jimmie Foxx, Willie Mays and Mike Schmidt on that list.

GIANTS: Willie Mays -- April 30, 1961 at Braves Four home runs, drove in eight runs and tallied 16 total bases

PADRES: Nate Colbert -- Aug. 1, 1972 at Braves He authored one of the best single-day performances in baseball history in August 1972. Colbert started his day going 4-for-5 with a pair of homers and five RBIs in a day game against the Braves. Evidently, he was just getting warmed up. In Game 2 of the doubleheader, Colbert cranked three more homers and finished with a remarkable single-day line of 7-for-9 with seven runs, five homers, 13 RBIs and a walk. The Padres would win both games, and Colbert joined Stan Musial as the only players in baseball history with five homers in a doubleheader.

More Baseball Handicapping

Baseball analysts have known for decades that pitching statistics related to strikeouts were the most important when predicting immediate and long-term success or failure.

*Bill James showed long ago in his Baseball Abstracts that strikeouts-per-nine innings outlined “this is what he is now, and how long his career will be” for pitchers better than any other single stat. ERA’s could be inconsistent, and strongly polluted by the impacts of home ballparks. Wins and Losses were polluted by varying run support or team quality. The ability (or inability) to throw strikeouts provided the cleanest reads.

*Newer stats that focus on “fielding independent” pitching rely heavily on strikeout counts because pitchers control their own destiny (or don’t) by how often they prevent balls from being put into play.

*Volatility introduced to the sport globally by changes in ball manufacturing only magnified the issue. Balls can’t soar farther if they’re not hit in the first place! If a league is playing with juiced balls, bettors definitely want to bet on pitchers that miss bats, against those who throw to contact.

Look up strikeout-related material for each day’s starting pitchers to gain a sense of which are most likely to dominate, or at least control their own destiny. K’s per 9 innings and K’s minus BB’s per 9 innings. Baseball handicapping fundamentals are the same around the world because baseball performance is bounded by the same realities.

M&M Boys at their Peak

1960 AL MVP

Winner: Roger Maris, NYY (225 points)

Runner-up: Mickey Mantle, NYY (222 points)

Maris led the AL in RBIs (112), extra-base hits (64) and slugging (.581) while finishing second with 39 homers to Mantle's 40.

1961 AL MVP

Winner: Roger Maris, NYY (202 points)

Runner-up: Mickey Mantle, NYY (198 points)

Maris: .269, 61 homers, 141 RBIs, 132 runs

Mantle: .317, 54 homers, 128 RBIs, 131 runs

MORE TIDBITS

Brooks Robinson and Wade Boggs each started 11 All-Star games at 3B.

Nov. 11, 2015: Aaron Hicks from Twins to Yankees for third string catcher John Ryan Murphy.

With CC Sabathia's retirement, the active leader in career strikeouts among left-handed hurlers is Atlanta's Cole Hamels (2,558 K's).

Christian Yelitch of the Brewers hit for the cycle twice in 2018, both times against the Reds. Only time in MLB history.

The age-defying wonder Bartolo Colon is considering an MLB comeback. Colon has the most wins of any Latin American-born pitcher in Major League history with 247. He passed Dennis Martinez (Born in Nicaragua, he finished his career with 245 wins.) in 2018.

1990 draft. Yankees take Rickey Ledee 16th round, Andy Pettitte 22nd round, Jorge Posada 24th round (as a junior college short stop) and Shane Spencer 28th round.

In 1983 Steve Carlton, Nolan Ryan and Gaylord Perry all passed Walter Johnson's career strikeout record of 3,508.

Willie Mays and Mike Trout have a combined total of two career postseason home runs.

Albert Pujols. He has 656 home runs, 2,075 RBIs and 14 100-RBI seasons and three MVP Awards (2005, '08, '09) and has been a World Series champion twice and won an NL Rookie of the Year Award (2001). And he once hit three home runs in a World Series game (2011), same as Reggie had in '77. Pujols was a 13th round draft pick.

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

Have a Day

Last week featured a summary of some great single game performances. One subscriber asked “what about Joe Adcock?”

Adcock was a LF and very good 1B who played for the Reds and the Braves from 1950 to 1966. He hit 336 HRs with 1,122 runs batted in and a career batting average of .277. On July 31, 1954 at Ebbets Field in front of 12,263 fans Adcock went 5 for 5, 4 HRs, 5 runs scored, 7 RBIs. His 18 total bases that day is a MLB record that still stands 66 years later.

Stolen Base Leaders Since 1920

Catcher-Hall of Famer Roger Bresnahan, who debuted on Aug. 27, 1897, is the all-time leader among catchers with 212 stolen bases, but Jason Kendall's 189 are the most by any backstop who debuted within the last 100 years.

2B - Joe Morgan swiped 689 bases during his Hall of Fame career, giving him 132 more than any other second baseman to debut over the last century (Davey Lopes is second with 557).

3B – Howard Johnson, who finished his career with 231 stolen bases, had six consecutive 20-steal seasons for the Mets from 1987-92, highlighted by a 41-steal campaign in '89.

SS - Bert Campaneris stole 649 bases over a 19-year career that included six All-Star selections and three World Series titles. One of those steals came on Sept. 8, 1965, the same day he became the first player to play all nine positions in one game.

CF - Wilson stole at least 20 bases each year from 1978-92, making him one of just five players in MLB history with 15 straight seasons of 20 stolen bases. Ty Cobb (897 steals), who debuted in 1905, is the overall leader among center fielders

RF - Ichiro burst onto the big league scene in 2001, stealing an MLB-best 56 bases while winning the AL Rookie of the Year and MVP Awards. He went on to steal at least 25 bases in each of his first 12 seasons en-route to his 509 career steals.

Pitcher – Bob Gibson stole 13 bases during his Hall of Fame career, one more than four-time All-Star Rip Sewell. Greg Maddux is next on the list with 11, while Zack Greinke leads all active pitchers with nine.

Great Seasons You May Have Forgotten

Mets: [Lance Johnson](#), CF, 1996

Key fact: 227 hits, most in a season in Mets history

The One Dog led the Majors with 227 hits this year, and he had a whopping 21 triples, which also led the league.

Mariners: [Bret Boone](#), 2B, 2001

Key fact: 8.8 WAR, 2nd in AL

This incredible Mariners year will always be known as the Ichiro year, and for good reason, but here's where we remind you that according to such advanced stats as WAR (per Baseball Reference), Boone was the best player on this team in 2001. If you're not a WAR person, well, sheesh, Boone also had 141 RBIs.

Blue Jays: [Pat Hentgen](#), RHP, 1996

Key fact: Led MLB with 10 complete games

Hentgen was always a perfectly fine pitcher, one who gave you a lot of innings, didn't strike out a lot of guys and kept the ball in the ballpark. But in 1996 he was brilliant, winning 20 games, giving up less than a homer every nine innings and tossing a stunning 265 2/3 innings. He ended up with a Cy Young Award that you probably already forgot he won.

Cardinals: [John Tudor](#), LHP, 1985

Key fact: Led qualified pitchers with a 0.94 WHIP

Tudor had a couple of good years with the Cardinals, but when St. Louis traded for him before the 1985 season, no one thought he would throw 10 shutouts that year.

D-backs: [Luis Gonzalez](#), LF, 2001

Key fact: 7.9 WAR, 3rd-most among NL position players

Yes, yes, he's a legend in Arizona. But his 2001 numbers are so outside his career norms that they still stagger. 57 homers! 142 RBIs! .429 OBP! How did that happen?

Dodgers: [Shawn Green](#), RF, 2001

Key fact: 49 HR, most by a Dodgers player in a single season

Sure, he hit 42 the next season, but Green's 49 homers in 2001 -- along with 20 steals, by the way -- still feels like something that happened in an alternative universe.

Multiple Positions

[Chone Figgins](#), 2002-14

Figgins first rose to prominence as a pinch-running specialist for the Angels in '02, the year they won the World Series. Figgins became a lineup staple for the Halos two years later, and he hit .293/.351/.408 with 96 steals and 196 runs scored over '04-05. In that two-year stretch, Figgins played 148 games at third base, 104 in center field, 62 at second, 17 at shortstop, 16 in left and 10 in right. He didn't stay in that role for long, becoming the Angels' starting third baseman in '08, but his unique versatility deserves recognition. In MLB history, he is one of just two players

(Cesar Tovar is the other) with 200 career games as a second baseman, third baseman and center fielder.

Cesar Tovar, 1965-76

In '68, Tovar became the second player ever to play all nine positions in a Major League game (Bert Campaneris was the first), but he was far from a novelty act. In his 12 big league seasons, the versatile Venezuelan appeared in 200-plus games at second base, third base and all three outfield spots. Tovar averaged 3.7 WAR per season from '66-72, and he received MVP votes in five of those years, finishing as high as seventh.

Dominating Pitchers

Jim Palmer is the only pitcher to win World Series games in three different decades (Wins in 1966, '70, '71 and '83 Fall Classics). The Orioles' all-time leader in wins, starts, complete games, shutouts, starter ERA and strikeouts, Palmer was a three-time Cy Young winner, six-time All-Star and won four Gold Gloves. He won 20 games eight times, three league win titles and two league ERA crowns. He led AL pitchers in starts and shutouts twice, complete games once and innings four times. He is the only Oriole to pitch in all six of the franchise's World Series appearances and the only pitcher in history to record a World Series victory in three different decades.

Pedro Martinez in Boston delivered seven seasons of utter dominance. The stretch included a record of 117-37, a 2.52 ERA, 1,683 strikeouts in 1,383 2/3 innings, two Cy Young Awards ('99 and '00) and a World Series title ('04). The righty went 23-4 with a team-record 313 strikeouts in '99, leading the AL in ERA (2.07) by a ridiculous margin over second-place finisher David Cone (3.44 ERA). Some think Martinez was even better in '00, when he posted a 1.74 ERA

Bob Feller's career ended in 1956, but 64 years later he is still the Tribe's all-time leader in wins (266), strikeouts (2,581), starts (484), complete games (279) and innings (3,872). He led the AL in wins six times and strikeouts seven times. The righty set single-season club records for strikeouts (348), innings (371), shutouts (10) and complete games (36) in '46. He pitched a franchise-record three no-hitters and 12 one-hitters and was a first-ballot Hall of Famer

Lots of Home Runs

Babe Ruth holds the record for most consecutive 40-homer seasons with seven (1926-32).

Most seasons with 40+ HRS – Ruth 1; Killebrew, Aaron, Barry Bonds, Arod 8, Griffey Jr., Sosa, Pujols 7; McGwire, Thome, Adam Dunn, Mays 6.

Aaron and Arod lead most seasons with 30+ at 15 (followed by Bonds and Pujols at 14)

Aaron leads 20+ with 20 seasons.

Babe Ruth led the AL in HRs 12 times. NL record is Mike Schmidt at 8. Ralph Kiner has the record for leading league in consecutive seasons with 7.

Sammy Sosa hit HRs in 45 MLB stadiums (ahead of Ken Griffey Jr. at 44 and Fred McGriff at 43)

Reggie Jackson is the only player to lead the league in HRs with 3 different teams—A's 73 and 75, Yankees 80 and Angels 82.

Arod hit 25 career grand slams, Lou Gehrig is second with 23-and probably no steroids

Jim Thome hit the most walk off HRs with 13. Pujols, Jimmy Foxx, Mantle, Musial, Frank Robinson and Ruth all tied at 12.

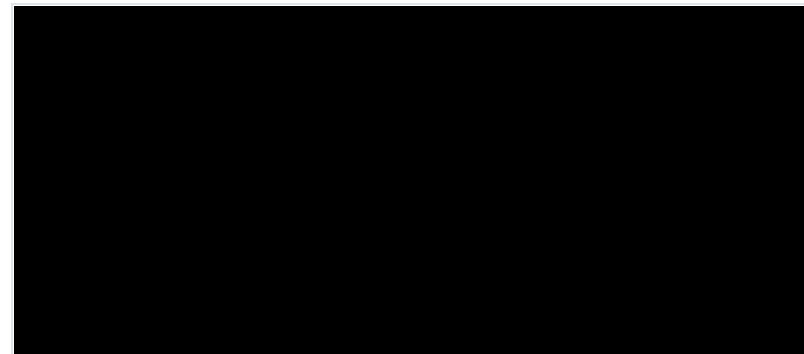
Don Mattingly 1987 and Travis Hafner of the Indians 2006 are tied with most grand slams in a season at 6

On August 25, 2011 against Oakland the Yankees hit 3 grand slams—Russell Martin, Robinson Cano and Curtis Granderson. Only time its been done in MLB history.

More Tidbits

Jason Varitek is the only catcher to catch four no-hitters: Hideo Nomo in 2001, Derek Lowe in 2002, Clay Buchholz in 2007, and Jon Lester in 2008.

A few weeks ago I listed the highest paid players. Those over \$30 million a year (in order) Trout-Cole-Scherzer-Greinke-Strasberg-Arenado-Verlander-Machdo-Price-Kershaw. Interestingly, according to Forbes which just published its 100 top earning global athletes (salary plus endorsement) Kershaw is the only baseball player in the top 100 at \$56 million total. The L.A. market sure pulls in the endorsements. Here is a link to the article, methodology and full list. [The World's Highest-Paid Athletes 2](#)



The World's Highest-Paid Athletes 2020

Paydays for the world's top-earning athletes dropped for the first time in four years, according to the 2020 For...

Draft Stuff

In '76, Detroit took Alan Trammell (second round), Jack Morris (fifth round) and Ozzie Smith (seventh round but did not sign). Three HOF in one draft-pretty good scouting.

In 1985 BJ Surhoff, Will Clark, Mike Witt and Barry Larkin played together on the U.S. Olympic team and went in that order with the first four picks in June to the Brewers, Giants, Rangers and Reds, going on to play a combined 69 seasons in the Majors that included 19 All-Star selections and Hall of Fame enshrinement for Larkin. Bonds went sixth to the Pirates and became baseball's home run king while accumulating more Wins Above Replacement (162.8) than any player in Draft history. Incaviglia (No. 8, Rangers), Weiss (No. 11, Athletics), Magrane (No. 18, Cardinals) and Palmeiro (No. 22, Cubs) also resurfaced in the first round and had lengthy big league careers, as did high schoolers Brian McRae (No. 17, Royals) and Gregg Jefferies (No. 20, Mets).

That's the best first round in Draft history, and there's plenty more talent behind it. Johnson, who had yet to harness his fearsome stuff, lasted until the Expos stole him in the second round with the 36th overall choice. He and John Smoltz, a high schooler who dropped to the Tigers in the 22nd round because of signability concerns, have joined Larkin in Cooperstown.

Other later-round standouts include Mark Grace (24th round, Cubs), Brady Anderson (10th, Red Sox), Randy Velarde (19th, White Sox) and Mike Stanley (16th, Rangers). The secondary phase of the January Draft spawned Chuck Finley (No. 4 overall, Angels) and John Wetteland (second, Dodgers), while Todd Stottlemire (No. 3 overall, Blue Jays) came out of the secondary phase in June.

Because one of our subscribers has a son who will hopefully be drafted (eventually) I thought a draft piece by Jim Bowden, former MLB GM who writes for The Athletic would be an interesting read.

[Here's why the top 5 teams in the draft should select position players](#)

It's not that I have anything against the top pitchers in this draft. In fact, based on what evaluators, scouts and analytics experts believe, there are pitchers like lefthanders Asa Lacy from Texas A&M and Reid Detmers from Louisville along with righthander Emerson Hancock from Georgia who should be given serious consideration.

But the teams that are picking in the top 5 of this year's MLB Draft should all take position players with their first pick and copy what the clubs did last year, as well as what teams did back in 2005, the only two years in a span of decades where a pitcher wasn't drafted with one of the top 5 selections.

The history of the draft suggests the odds are against any pitcher taken with one of the first five selections unless they are considered a generational talent, like Stephen Strasburg and Justin Verlander were when they were drafted. There are no pitchers of that caliber in this year's class who belong in that conversation.

There were 80 top 5 picks from 2000-2015, and of those 80 players selected, 42 were pitchers. Of those 42 pitchers, only five of them lived up to being a top 5 pick. (Justin Verlander '04; David Price '07; Stephen Strasburg '09; Gerrit Cole '11; and Trevor Bauer '11). That means the odds are just 1 in 16 that teams will hit on a pitcher with their top 5 pick. Verlander and Strasburg were considered no-brainer type decisions, so if you take them out of the equation, it's only three in 78. You get my point. The odds are not good.

There are several major-league clubs that would like to redo history and take a position player over the pitcher they drafted. For example, the Tampa Bay Rays could have taken first baseman Mark Teixeira instead of their selection of right-handed pitcher Dewon Brazelton back in the 2001 draft. The Pittsburgh Pirates, who drafted Brad Lincoln in 2006, could have taken Evan Longoria instead. The Pirates could have taken Manny Machado with the second overall pick in 2010, but instead decided to draft right-handed pitcher Jameson Taillon. Or how about the Houston Astros, who could have taken Kris Bryant in 2013, but instead decided to draft right-handed pitcher Mark Appel? How about the Baltimore Orioles, back in 2008, drafting left-handed pitcher Brian Matusz with catcher Buster Posey still on the board? There is just one example after another.

Oakland's Billy Beane always used to tell me that you need three pitching prospects for one spot on the team because one candidate will get hurt, one will regress and if you're lucky, one will actually make it. What if your first overall pick is the one who gets hurt and blows out a shoulder? Or what if he regresses? Then what do you have to show for the future in a season in which your team lost 100+ games to get to the top of the draft? Imagine the frustration for your fans, media, players, coaches and front office when you end up with a Bryan Bullington, Brien Taylor or Matt Anderson? I should know. I made the same mistakes when I was a GM overseeing the drafts for the Reds and Nationals. I listened and trusted my scouting directors and scouts, a group of great evaluators, with consensus opinions and videos, stats and radar gun readings to prove their point.

In 2002 with the Cincinnati Reds we drafted right-handed pitcher Chris Gruler with the third overall pick. He threw 98 mph with a plus-plus curveball and changeup. We could have drafted Prince Fielder, who was still on the board. I'll never forget Hall of Famer Johnny Bench, who was a special assistant to me at the time, tell me after watching Gruler that "Gruler has a better breaking ball and better changeup than Tom Seaver." Combine that with a high-90s fastball

with above-average four-seam life and you can understand why the consensus of our scouts was to take him (ironically over Scott Kazmir and not Fielder). Bench wasn't wrong with what he saw in Gruler — it was the same opinion as our scouting director and the majority of cross checkers and scouting supervisors — it was just that taking a pitcher over a hitter with one of those top 5 picks in the draft was high risk.

Of the previous 30 AL and NL Cy Young Award winners combined, just two taken in the top three picks of the June draft have ever won the award — Verlander and Price. Let that marinate for a moment.

Then, let's take a look at some of the recent Cy Young Award winners: Jacob deGrom was taken in the ninth round, Blake Snell was the 52nd player taken overall in the 2011 draft, Corey Kluber was taken in the fourth round by the San Diego Padres back in 2007 and finally Max Scherzer was taken with the 11th overall pick back in 2006.