

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

10.9.2022

Good morning baseball fans,

How 'bout those Mariners, Guardians and Phillies?

We enjoyed a regular season that saw **Miguel Cabrera** get his 3,000 hit, **Albert Pujols** hit his 700<sup>th</sup> HR, **Aaron Judge** hit 62. Now on to the expanded playoffs.

Grab a coffee and enjoy a bunch of Aaron Judge, thoughts on Judge and Bonds and the “true” HR record, surprising playoff heros, lots of miscellaneous stuff and of course, trivia.

### **THIS WEEK’S TRIVIA CHALLENGE**

Want to feel old? **Roberto Clemente** got his 3,000<sup>th</sup> hit 50 years ago. In honor of Clemente and Cabrera, a 3K hits question. 33 players have had 3,000 or more hits in the majors.

Clemente is the only right-handed batter to reach 3,000 playing less than 20 seasons.

Four left-handed batters surpassed 3,000 hits and played less than 20 seasons. Here are the years they reached 3K, name the 4 hitters.

Though he played the majority of his career in the AL, this lefty got his 3,000<sup>th</sup> hit while playing for the Marlins in 2016.

1999 this AL infielder reached 3,000 hits in his 18<sup>th</sup> and final season.

1985 this AL infielder played 19 seasons.

1979 this NL outfielder wrapped his 19-year career.

### **MISCELLANEOUS STUFF**

Fifth straight division title for the defending World Series champion Atlanta Braves. Don’t count them out.

111 regular season wins—hats off to the Dodgers. The 2022 Dodgers are the seventh team to lead both the AL and NL in most runs scored and fewest runs allowed. the last to do it was the 2001 Mariners

Mets win 101 games and don't win division title. Yankees first half looked like they would top 110 wins, but they win their division with 99 wins.

After 11 years Philadelphia locked up MLB's final playoff spot Monday night – its first since 2011 – defeating the Astros 3-0 in Houston behind a masterful performance by starting pitcher **Aaron Nola**.

The Phillies right-hander had a perfect game broken up in the bottom of the seventh inning, recording nine strikeouts in 6 2/3 innings of work. His outing marked the longest Phillies' perfect-game bid since **Roy Halladay's** perfect game in 2010.

**Kyle Schwarber** also extended his National League lead with home runs No. 45 and 46 in his eighth multi-homer game this season.

#### Phillies sweep Cards

Game one in St. Louis. There was one out in the top of the ninth. The Cardinals were two outs away from a workmanlike 2-0 win.

The Phillies went: single, walk, walk, bases-loaded hit-by-pitch, two-run **Jean Segura** single on a pitch that was closer to the Arch than the strike zone, run on a groundball, another on an RBI single, then add in a sac fly ... and you had *six runs*.

There has never been an inning like it. There has never been a comeback like it.

This was the 1,706th baseball game in postseason history. And we just saw a team do something that *no team had ever done* in any of those games.

On to game 2:

**Aaron Nola** was the starting pitcher in the NL Wild Card berth clincher on Monday and the NL Wild Card Series clincher on Saturday. He pitched 6 2/3 scoreless innings against the Cardinals, striking out six and allowing only four hits and one walk in the Phillies 2-0 series clinching win. Phillies swept series on the road and head to play Atlanta.

**Albert Pujols and Yadier Molina** combined for three of the Card's 6 hits in their final games.

#### Mariners sweep Blue Jays

The Seattle Mariners snapped what was a 20-year MLB playoff drought Saturday, briefly giving Philadelphia the longest drought in the majors. The Mariners didn't see a postseason appearance from 2012 to 2021 after five straight trips between 2007 and 2011.

There are lots of ways to look at the Mariners' playoff drought, but here's one that boggles the mind: Friday marked 7,655 days since the club's incredible 2001 campaign -- which featured a record-tying 116 victories -- ended in Game 5 of the AL Championship Series at Yankee Stadium.

The franchise's last postseason victory had come in Game 3 of that series, on Oct. 20, 2001, also in the Bronx. **Jamie Moyer** was the winning pitcher, and current Mariners star **Julio Rodríguez** was less than 1 year old at the time.

In game one in Toronto Seattle didn't waste time getting the bats going, with the third hitter of the game, Eugenio Suárez, lining an RBI double to right field. That made him the first Mariner with a postseason hit since **Mark McLemore** singled off Hall of Fame closer **Mariano Rivera** in the ninth inning of 2001 ALCS Game 5. McLemore turned 58 years old on Tuesday. Rodriguez became the youngest Mariner to ever get a post season hit, passing 22 year old **ARod** in 1997.

Blue Jays starter **Alek Manoah** gave up three first-inning runs. Not only did Manoah end the regular season with a 15-inning scoreless streak, but he had a 2.03 ERA in the first inning in 2022. He had not allowed a single first-inning run across 15 outings at Rogers Centre, making him one of only five MLB pitchers with at least 10 home starts and a 0.00 first-inning ERA this season.

Mariners starter **Luis Castillo** shut down an explosive Blue Jays lineup, going 7 1/3 scoreless innings while allowing six hits and no walks and striking out five. He became the first Mariners pitcher to throw at least seven scoreless innings in a playoff game.

Then we go to game two. 8-1 Toronto after 5. Then things got good for you Mariners fans. A fun rally to watch against a strong Blue Jays lineup. 10-9 win, 2 game sweep on the road. Seattle will have its hands full with the Astros in ALDS but for now, pretty impressive.

In between Mariners postseason games, the Yankees played 126 of them. The Cardinals played 125. And the other four teams currently in the AL West have 240.

#### Guardians sweep Rays

Game one saw a Guardians 2-1 victory over the Rays, a game that turned back the clock. Cleveland and Tampa Bay finished their game in just two hours and 17 minutes, which is the quickest postseason game since 1999. It is also the first time an MLB playoff game finished in under 2:20 since 2006.

The recipe for a game that short is good starting pitching and few offensive rallies, which is exactly what happened. Both the Guardians' **Shane Bieber** and the Rays' **Shane Bieber** pitched at least seven innings, and each team only used one reliever in addition to their starter.

Game 2. 15 innings. It took two pitches before Cleveland's **Oscar Gonzalez** smacked a cutter from former Cleveland ace **Corey Kluber** deep into the left-center-field seats to not only give the Guardians a 1-0, 15-inning victory over the Rays in Game 2 of the American League Wild Card Series on Saturday afternoon, but also send them to the AL Division Series, which begins Tuesday against the Yankees in New York.

History was made in the 13th inning on Saturday afternoon at Progressive Field, as **Steven Kwan**'s flyout to end that frame made it the longest scoreless game in postseason history.

It was a four-hour, 57-minute marathon:

This was the 11th game in postseason history to reach the 10th inning without either team scoring. It was the first AL postseason game to do so since Cleveland beat Baltimore, 1-0, in 11 innings in Game 6 of the 1997 AL Championship Series to advance to the World Series.

It ultimately became the longest scoreless game of any kind -- regular season or postseason -- since the Rays dropped a 1-0 decision to the Red Sox in 16 innings on July 17, 2011.

Going back to the top of the seventh inning in Game 1 of the series, Tampa Bay and Cleveland combined to post 34 straight scoreless half-innings. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, that is the longest streak to occur in a postseason series, smashing the previous record of 28 (1999 NLCS Games 3 and 4 between the Braves and Mets).

This was the seventh game in postseason history to last at least 15 innings, and it stands as the longest since the Dodgers and Red Sox duelled for 18 innings in Game 3 of the 2018 World Series.

It was the third-longest series-clinching postseason game, trailing only Game 4 of the 2005 NLDS (Astros over Braves in 18 innings) and Game 6 of the 1986 NLCS (Mets over Astros in 16).

The losing pitcher was longtime Cleveland ace Corey Kluber, who entered in the 13th inning and eventually yielded Gonzalez's walk-off homer in the 15th. It was only the sixth relief appearance in the two-time AL Cy Young Award winner's career and the first since April 20, 2013, at Houston. Kluber had not entered a game mid-inning since his Major League debut on Sept. 1, 2011, against Oakland.

Gonzalez became the 13th player to crush a walk-off home run to clinch a postseason series. Among that group, this was the second latest. Only the Astros' **Chris Burke**, who hit one in the 18th inning in Game 4 of the 2005 NLDS against the Braves, walked it off deeper into a game.

Gonzalez is the fourth player with a walk-off homer in the 15th inning or later of any postseason game, joining Burke, the Dodgers' **Max Muncy** (18th; 2018 World Series Game 3) and the Yankees' **Jim Leyritz** (15th; 1995 ALDS Game 2).

By the way, game one went 2:17 even though there was a pretty significant delay in the middle when umpires broke down the video to see if **Amed Rosario** missed second base on Ramirez's game-winning home run. He kind of danced around the bag while waiting to see if the ball would leave the yard. It was the fastest in the postseason since 1999 and Cleveland's quickest since its World Series-clinching win in 1948.

Tampa Bay manager **Kevin Cash** challenged, and even though that seems kind of petty, I totally do not blame him, I mean, rules are rules. One of the most famous plays in baseball history is known as Merkle's Boner, where a rookie named **Fred Merkle** simply forgot to go to second base on what should have been a walk-off hit. Fans poured on the field, it was mayhem, but when Cubs second baseman **Johnny Evers** saw that Merkle had not gone to second he got the ball (which might have been thrown into the crowd) and touched second base, completing the forceout of Merkle.

Anyway, as far as the video review goes:

1. It seems from the video that Rosario did not miss the bag. It's impossible to tell for sure, but from the angles provided, it looks to me like he touched second with his left foot. Rosario says he touched it.
2. There is, however, some circumstantial evidence — he looks back dubiously after rounding second, as if thinking: "Hey, did I get second base?" But he didn't go back to touch it, which either means he remembered, "Oh yeah, I got it," or he thought, "Nah, going back would be too embarrassing."

Either way, the two-run homer stood

#### Greatness Denied (most wins without finishing first, MLB history)

|           | Year | Record  | Behind    |
|-----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Dodgers   | 2021 | 106-56  | Giants    |
| Dodgers   | 1942 | 104-50  | Cardinals |
| Cubs      | 1909 | 104-49  | Pirates   |
| Giants    | 1993 | 103-59  | Braves    |
| Yankees   | 1954 | 103-51  | Indians   |
| Athletics | 2001 | 102-60  | Mariners  |
| Dodgers   | 1962 | 102-63* | Giants    |

Tigers                    1961   101-61   Yankees

*\*101-61 in scheduled play, lost NL playoff series to Giants 2-1*

How good was rookie outfielder **Michael Harris II** for the Braves? They were 22-24 on the day he arrived, and went 79-37 after that. Speaking of Braves rookies--**Spencer Strider** put together a dominant a partial season with 202 strikeouts in just 131 2/3 innings.

The Boston Red Sox finished 78-84, its lowest win total in a full season since 2015. Last place for the fifth time in 11 seasons.

You have probably read that the Guardians are the youngest team to make the playoffs since the 1986 Mets. Youngest team before that? 1970 Reds who started 70-30. **Johnny Bench C, Lee May 1B, Tommy Helms 2B, Dave Concepcion SS, Tony Perez 3B, Bernie Carbo LF, Bobby Tolan CF, Pete Rose RF.**

**Albert Pujols, Yadier Molina and Adam Wainwright.** Between them that's 5,695 hits, 889 home runs, 195 wins, 2,567 innings of pitching and two World Series titles. End of an era in St. Louis.

In between Mariners trips to the playoffs, Pujols made it to home plate 12,365 times in the regular season, plus 332 times in the postseason, plus 23 more times in the All-Star Game. And in between Mariners postseason games, Albert had time to rack up 3,190 regular-season hits and 666 home runs. And that's so many that the only players in history who ever fit those numbers into a whole career, let alone one team's playoff drought, are **Henry Aaron and Willie Mays.**

Mets closer **Edwin Diaz** struck out more than half the batters he faced this year. Really. He struck out 118 batters and he faced 235.

The Yankees are the first team in Major League history to have a batter with 60 or more home runs (**Aaron Judge**) and a pitcher with 250 or more strikeouts (**Gerrit Cole**) in the same season.

**Gerrit Cole** is the sixth Yankee to lead the American League in strikeouts. **Al Downing** paced the AL with 217 strikeouts in 1964. The other Yankees to lead the league in strikeouts were: **Allie Reynolds** (160 in 1952), **Vic Raschi** (164 in 1951), **Lefty Gómez** (163 in 1933, 158 in 1934 and 194 in 1937), and **Red Ruffing** (190 in 1932).

Cole broke **Ron Guidry's** team record of 248 K's. Guidry established a franchise record with 248 strikeouts in 1978, he placed second in the AL, behind the Angels' **Nolan Ryan** (260).

October 6, 1926, **Babe Ruth** went 3-for-3 with three home runs, four runs, four RBIs and two walks during the Yankees' 10-5 win over the Cardinals in Game 4 of the World Series.

Ruth remains one of only four players in Major League history to hit three home runs in a World Series game; Ruth did it twice, also achieving the feat on Oct. 9, 1928 also against the Cards. The others are: **Reggie Jackson** (Oct. 18, 1977) for the Yankees against Dodgers, **Albert Pujols** (Oct. 22, 2011) for Cards against Texas, and **Pablo Sandoval** (Oct. 24, 2012) for Giants against Tigers.

Other playoff team odd stats: Since the league expanded to 30 teams in 1998, just five teams have made the playoffs while hitting fewer than the 127 homers the Guardians hit this year.; the Cardinals were 28th in MLB with a 19.6% strikeout rate. No other playoff team ranked below 14th. No team with a strikeout rate below 20% has won a playoff series since 2015. No team in the bottom five in strikeout rate has won a playoff series since 2007; the 2020 Rays team that won the AL pennant scored 42% of its runs on homers, while last year's team scored 44% of the time on long balls. This year's squad? 31.8%, more than only the miserable Tigers.

Tuning up for the playoffs, for the third time in his last six starts, **Justin Verlander** did not allow a hit. He's been pulled with that no-hitter intact all three times, as the Astros manage Verlander's workload in his first season back from Tommy John surgery and with an eye towards a deep October run. Since coming off the IL on September 16, Verlander has a 1.17 ERA and 1.07 FIP in four starts, with a 31/3 K/BB. He finishes the season with a 1.75 ERA, seventh-lowest in a full season since the mound was lowered in 1969.

**Sandy Alcantara** of the Marlins has piled up 29 1/3 more innings than anyone else in the league and almost 50 more than an otherwise-exceptional contender like Arizona's **Zac Gallen**.

There's also this: Alcántara has pitched to 93 more hitters than the next-biggest workhorse in his league (the Cardinals' **Miles Mikolas**). That's the equivalent of four extra starts worth of volume, just compared with the guy who would lead the league *if Alcántara weren't in it*. But the gap between him and the only NL starter with a better ERA — the Dodgers' **Julio Urías** — is an eye-opening 218 batters faced, which is like nine or 10 more starts worth of work!

Braves rookie righthander **Spencer Strider**'s 13.8 K/9 is the most of any big league pitcher who made 20 starts. Even **Jacob deGrom** has never fanned batters at that rate over a full season. ridiculous strikeout total (202 in 131 2/3 innings).

**J.T. Realmuto** was the best player on a Phillies team that almost never had everyone healthy. He led MLB catchers in innings behind the plate with 1131, 127 more than the next one, and had 14 more starts at catcher than anyone else.

**Rob Thomson** as manager of the Phillies. The Phillies are 65-44 under Thomson despite missing **Bryce Harper** for much of that time.

It will be their first time in the playoffs for the Phils since 2011, when they lost NLDS Game 5 to the Cardinals 1-0, one of the most memorable games in Division Series history.

That 2011 game marked the end of a great Phillies run: Five straight NL East titles, two NL pennants, and the 2008 championship. The homegrown core of **Chase Utley, Jimmy Rollins, Ryan Howard, Cole Hamels, and Carlos Ruiz**, supplemented by trades for **Cliff Lee, Roy Halladay, and Brad Lidge**, was a minor dynasty during a highly competitive era for MLB.

Since the last time the Phillies played a postseason game:

- The Cardinals had played 69 of them.
- The Dodgers had played 96 of them.
- The other four teams in the NL East had played 98 of them.
- The Eagles had played eight of them.
- The Flyers had played 43 of them.
- And the Sixers had played 63 of them.

**Jean Segura** had himself a day in game one. Until Friday, the Phillies' second baseman was the answer to this unfortunate trivia question: Which active player had played in the most games in his career without ever appearing in the postseason?

It was a slice of trivia that summed up the first 1,328 games of Segura's career. But No. 1,329? That one made him the answer to a much more upbeat trivia question.

In the ninth inning of his first playoff game, it was Segura's shocking two-run single that gave the Phillies the lead.

**His place in postseason-debut history** — So let's see now. A guy plays 1,328 games without ever reaching the postseason, then drives in the game-winning run in the ninth (or later) in the first postseason game of his life? Could anyone have ever done that?

That no player had *ever* done what he did. But check out the previous record-holder.

**Segura: GW RBI in ninth in Game 1,329**

**Old record-holder: Some guy named Pete Rose! GW RBI in Game 1,224**

Yes, according to STATS, Rose had held this record for more than 50 years. He'd played 1,223 games before his postseason debut, then slapped a go-ahead 10th-inning single off the Pirates' **Dock Ellis** in Game 1 of the 1970 NLCS. So that's a feat for you.

**Max Scherzer**, game one against the Padres. Four home runs? Seven runs? Never made it through the fifth? Max made 23 starts this year. He allowed seven runs in none of them. He allowed four home runs in none of them. But he did both in this game.

Four bombs and seven runs in October? Before Max took the mound, only one pitcher in history had ever done that in a postseason game: **Gene Thompson**, in Game 3 of the 1939 World Series. Thompson gave up only six home runs that whole season. Then he served up one to **Joe DiMaggio**, another to **Bill Dickey** and two more to **Charlie Keller**. How 'bout Max bringing Gene Thompson back to life?

Four bombs and seven runs any time of year? This Max Scherzer guy has made 421 regular-season starts. He has given up that many homers and that many runs in exactly one of them — on May 6, 2016, at Wrigley.

- Max in April: 94 batters faced, 1 HR
- Max in May: 99 batters faced, 4 HR
- Max in July: 117 batters faced, 2 HR
- Max in August: 164 batters faced, 2 HR
- Max in September: 57 batters faced, 2 HR
- Max on Friday: 21 batters faced, 4 HR

Four home runs against the Padres? In 162 games this season, the Padres hit four home runs off the same pitcher exactly once — against the Twins' **Joe Ryan** on July 29. Which means they did it exactly zero times against any National League pitcher ... until they made four trots in a postseason game against Max Scherzer

Another night, another home run for **Albert Pujols** and another home run record for the likely Hall of Famer.

Not only did Pujols hit home run No. 703 on Monday night at PNC Park, but it was the 263rd go-ahead home run of the slugger's career. That go-ahead blast, which broke a scoreless tie in the top of the sixth inning, pushed Pujols ahead of **Barry Bonds** (262) for the most in Major League history dating back to 1961, per Elias Sports Bureau. Nine of his past 12 long balls have either tied the game or put the Cardinals into the lead.

Monday's home run was the 370th of Pujols' 22-year career on the road, tying him with Hall of Famer Hank Aaron for second all-time in that category. Bonds is the all-time NL/AL leader in that category with 383 road home runs. When Pujols hit a hanging 76.5 mph curveball from Pirates right-hander **Mitch Keller** for a two-run home run, it extended his record of pitchers he's homered against to 458. He opened the season trailing Bonds (449), but he has easily blown past that mark with 24 home runs in the 22nd year of his MLB career.

The 42-year-old Pujols has hit 18 of his 24 home runs after the MLB All-Star Game.

For his career, he's hit 503 homers against right-handed pitchers and 200 versus lefties.

Pujols trails only Bonds (762), **Hank Aaron** (755) and **Babe Ruth** (714) all-time in home runs.

Pujols' homer in his final regular-season at-bat at Busch Stadium was something of a fitting bookend for him. Way back on April 9, 2001, he went deep in his \_first \_at-bat in St. Louis during the Cardinals' home opener.

In his career, Pujols has hit 484 home runs while playing first base -- far more than the 119 he's hit as a DH. Also, a whopping 505 of Pujols' home runs have come while he was hitting third -- 374 more than any other spot in the lineup.

Since he began his career in 2001, Albert Pujols has 263 go-ahead home runs, almost 80 more than anyone else in that span. (Second is **David Ortiz** (186 go-ahead home runs since the start of 2001, just five more than **Miguel Cabrera**)

**Oliver Marmol**, manager of the Cardinal got to manage in his first postseason game, at 36 years, 97 days old. He's the first 36-year-old to manage a postseason game since **Sparky Anderson** led the Reds into the 1970 NLCS.

**Shohei Ohtani** batted .275/.358/.524 and he's top-five in triples, home runs, total bases, OPS+ and runs created. He plays for a team that is THIRTEENTH in runs and yet he's sixth in runs scored and seventh in RBIs.

Shohei Ohtani the pitcher went 15-8 with a 2.35 ERA, and he's striking out 11.9 hitters per nine innings (tops in the league), he almost threw a no-hitter in his last start, and he's top-five in strikeouts, ERA, FIP and pitcher WAR.

**Babe Ruth** fans do love to talk about how he was a great pitcher and a great hitter — and he was — but that was also 100 years ago, and even Ruth wasn't a great pitcher and hitter *at the same time*. Once the Yankees got him, they made him a full-time outfielder.

**Michael Nelson Trout**. He has not played 150 games in a season since he was 24 years old. Each season since then — six years and counting — has been altered by something, a nagging injury, a major injury, a worldwide pandemic, something.

Trout had a painful back problem this season. Mike Trout put up a .999 OPS anyway.

That .999 OPS is the key — it's not like OPS is the ultimate statistic or anything like that, there are various mathematical problems with it. But OPS is stubbornly effective at identifying great offense, and here are Mike Trout's OPS numbers going back to when he was 23 year old.

2022: .999

2021: 1.090

2020: .993

2019: .1.083

2018: 1.088

2017: 1.071

2016: .991

2015: .991

Extraordinary. His career OPS is 1.002, and only one other player in the last 60 years has put up a career OPS over 1.000 — that's **Barry Bonds**.

Through age 30, he has already cemented his place in Cooperstown — his 82.4 WAR is about the same as **Ken Griffey Jr.**, more than **Pete Rose** or **Joe DiMaggio**, and a good Trout season away from **George Brett**, and maybe **Jimmie Foxx** and **Al Kaline**, too.

There's a touch of sadness surrounding Trout's career. Sadness that his Angels never contend. Sadness that you almost never see him on television without making an extreme effort. Sadness that he can't stay healthy enough to put up a full season's worth of numbers.

Trout saved one of his most prodigious blasts for his last at-bat of the season.

Not only did the Angels' superstar smash his 40th homer by sending one out in the eighth inning of the Halos' season-closing 3-2 loss to the A's on Wednesday, but it also went a projected 490 feet to straightaway center field, qualifying as the longest homer by an Angels player since Statcast was introduced in 2015.

Trout absolutely crushed a 3-2 fastball from **Norge Ruiz** to reach a personal 350-homer milestone, as well as totaling 40 long balls in a season for the third time in his career.

Trout went deep 40 times in 2022 despite being limited to 119 games due to injuries -- the third-fewest games played in a 40-homer season in AL/NL history. The only players with 40 homers or more in fewer games than Trout did so in the strike-shortened 1994 season, as **Ken Griffey Jr.** had 40 homers in 111 games and **Matt Williams** hit 43 blasts in 112 games.

**J.D. Martinez** hit 45 homers in that same span of 119 games in 2017, with Trout now joining him as the most recent sluggers to accomplish the feat.

He became the first player in Angels franchise history to record three seasons with at least 40 homers, passing **Troy Glaus**, who did it twice. Trout also hit 41 homers in '15 and a career-high 45 in '19. Trout's homer surpassed his previous record blast of 486 feet, which also came at the Coliseum against lefty **Brett Anderson** on Sept. 5, 2019. It was the fifth longest homer hit by any player in the Majors this year and the longest not recorded at Coors Field. It also left the bat at 110.6 mph.

Trout hit .283/.369/.630 with 40 homers, 28 doubles and 80 RBIs this season,

Phillies prospect **Andrew Painter** ranked first or second among Minor League pitchers (min. 100 IP) in ERA (1.56), FIP (2.02), WHIP (0.89) and K% (39.8). The 2021 13th overall pick climbed two levels, from Single-A to Double-A, in his age-19 season.

The Minor League postseason ended last Sunday when Durham defeated Reno, 10-6, to claim the Triple-A National Championship in Las Vegas. The following are officially the champions of each full-season circuit in the Minors:

Triple-A: Durham (TB)  
International: Durham (TB)  
Pacific Coast: Reno (ARI)  
Eastern: Somerset (NYY)  
Southern: Pensacola (MIA)  
Texas: Frisco (TEX)  
Midwest: South Bend (CHC)  
Northwest: Eugene (SF)  
South Atlantic: Bowling Green (TB)  
California: Lake Elsinore (SD)  
Carolina: Charleston (TB)  
Florida State: St. Lucie (NYM)

**Nestor Cortes.** How good has he been for the Yankees? His 2.44 era is the best for a Yankee lefty starter since Ron Guidry 2.79 in 1979.

Veteran leadership on the road helps a lot. **Freddie Freeman** of the Dodgers.

In road games this season Freeman led NL in hits, extra base hits, runs scored, OPS and is second in batting average.

Through August **Paul Goldschmidt's** OPS+ was over 200. If he'd stayed at that level, he'd have been in **Lou Gehrig** Land. But even after a rough September, he's still at 181 (or 81 percent above league average). And only four NL first basemen in the live-ball era have had a full season with a 181 OPS+ or better: **Mark McGwire, Albert Pujols, Willie McCovey and Stan Musial.**

You can add **Jeff Bagwell** and Freeman if you want to count seasons shortened by a labor mess or a pandemic. But that's still a dazzling list. And ohbytheway, Freeman is at "only" 154 this year. So even in one of Freeman's most consistent and productive seasons, it's hard to argue that he's been a more imposing offensive force than Goldschmidt.

Goldschmidt is a four-time Gold Glove winner who has committed one error all season.

How bad did the **Javier Baez-Jonathan Schoop** signings work out for the Tigers?

44 combined walks in over 1,000 plate appearances – and 248 strikeouts! Juan Soto walked 43 times in his first 48 games as a Padre. The double-play duo for the Tigers has walked 44 times all year, in 1,074 trips to the plate.

Does that seem hard? It's because it *is* incredibly hard.

Who's the only qualifying hitter in baseball who has walked in less than 4 percent of his plate appearances this year but struck out in more than 20 percent? That would be Jonathan Schoop (3.6 percent, 20.7 percent).

Who are the only qualifying teammates who have each walked in under 5 percent of their plate appearances but whiffed in more than 20 percent? Right you are. That would be Báez and Schoop.

But hold on, this gets even wilder. These two have become only the second set of qualifying teammates *in the entire live-ball era* with walk rates under 5 percent and strikeout rates over 20 percent in the same season. The other: **Tim Anderson and Leury García** of the 2019 White Sox.

Báez signed last winter for six years, \$140 million — the biggest deal in Tigers history for a player not named Miguel Cabrera. Unfortunately, his signature achievement so far is he's in danger of finishing this season with more errors (26) than walks (just got to 26). No AL player has pulled that off, with at least 25 of both, in three decades — since **Mark Lewis** (26/25) in 1992.

Schoop is currently rocking a .239 on-base percentage — the worst by any Tigers hitter with this many plate appearances since **Bobby Lowe** in 1904 (also .236) and the second-lowest *by anyone for any AL team* in the live-ball era (1920-2022). (**Jim Levey's** .237, for the 1933 St. Louis Browns, is still hanging onto that honor.)

Another OOPS-the Marlins signed **Avisaíl García** last off season 4 years/\$53 million. He has grounded into almost as many double plays (12) as he has extra-base hits (17) or walks (16). And Baseball Reference's Offensive Wins Above Average computations rank him as *the worst offensive player in the National League* among all hitters who got to the plate as many times as he did. But hey, he did hit three home runs in Miami — all season.

The average time of a nine-inning major league game dropped for the first time since 2018, likely helped by the introduction of the PitchCom electronic device to signal pitches. The average this season was 3 hours, 3 minutes, 44 seconds, down from a record 3:10:07 last year. MLB's average was 2:46 in 2005 and 2:33 in 1981.

Higher velocity and increased shifts led to the major league batting average dropping to .243, its lowest since 1968. Defensive shifts and 100 mile-per-hour pitches set records this season, contributing to the worrisome offensive decline Major League Baseball is trying to address with the first restriction on shifts next year. The only seasons with lower averages than this year were the record low of .237 in 1968, along with 1967 and the deal-ball era seasons of 1884, 1888, and 1908. **Luis Arraez's** .316 average for Minnesota was the lowest by an American League batting champion since **Carl Yastrzemski** hit .301 in 1968.

The 30 MLB teams drew nearly 64.6 million fans for the regular season that ended Wednesday, which is up from the 45.3 million who attended games in 2021, according to Baseball Reference. MLB attendance had been declining slowly for years — even before the pandemic — after hitting its high mark of 79.4 million in 2007. This year's total is the fewest in a non-COVID-19 season since the sport expanded to 30 teams in 1998.

Use of Major League Baseball's injured list declined by 13 percent this season and time lost fell by 4 percent.

Just over half of the 1,261 video review challenges made by teams in the major leagues were successful this season. Major League Baseball said Monday that 633 calls challenged by clubs were overturned, which comes to 50.2 percent. There were 240 calls confirmed and 388 allowed to stand — where there was not enough evidence to confirm or overturn.

## **2022 Leaders**

### **Home runs**

#### **AL/MLB: Aaron Judge (NYY), 62**

No surprises here. Judge has held at least a share in the Major League lead in homers since May 2

#### **NL: Kyle Schwarber (PHI), 46**

In his first season with the Phillies, he topped 40 home runs for the first time in his career, then accelerated past that mark in the final two weeks of the season, becoming the first Phillie to lead the NL in home runs since **Ryan Howard** in '08.

## Batting average

### AL: Luis Arraez (MIN), .316

The Twins' Ichiro-esque hit machine took home the first of what could be many batting titles. Arraez trailed in the batting race with about a week to go, but he went 5-for-13 in the season's final days to take the title and Triple Crown away from Judge.

### NL/MLB: Jeff McNeil (NYM), .326

It came down to the wire, but McNeil ultimately captured the NL batting title despite a push from **Freddie Freeman**. The Mets utility man hit all over the lineup and played all over the field in what was the best season of his career to date, becoming just the second player in franchise history to take home a batting title (**José Reyes**, 2011).

## RBI

### AL: Aaron Judge (NYY), 131

A guy with 62 homers is bound to drive in a ton of runs, and Judge was no exception in 2022. Judge's 131 RBIs are a career high, giving him his first RBI title.

### NL: Pete Alonso (NYM), 131

In another wildly productive season, Alonso set a new Mets single-season record for RBIs in '22, blazing past the previous mark of 124 set by **Mike Piazza** in 1999 and tied by **David Wright** in 2008. Alonso and Judge's combined feat is also worth recognition -- the last time both leagues had at least one player reach 130+ RBIs was in 2007. (**Arod** 156 for Yankees, **Matt Holliday** 137 for the Rockies—**Magglio Ordonez** drove in 139 for the Tigers along with 54 doubles and a .363 average to finish second in the MVP vote).

## Stolen bases:

### AL: Jorge Mateo (BAL), 35

Mateo jockeyed for position with teammate **Cedric Mullins**, but ultimately came out on top, becoming the first Oriole to lead the AL in stolen bases since **Brian Roberts** in 2007.

### NL/MLB: Jon Berti (MIA): 41

Berti, in addition to being the only player to reach the 40-SB mark in 2022, did so in just 102 games, which made a little bit of history -- no player has ever led the Majors in stolen bases in a full season with fewer games played.

## Wins:

### AL: Justin Verlander (HOU), 18

Verlander's 2022 was a comeback season for the ages -- after winning his second Cy Young Award in '19, he made just one start in '20 before undergoing Tommy John surgery at the age of 37. When he made his return as a 39-year-old with nearly 3,000 career innings pitched, it

seemed fair to assume his best years were behind him. Not so. He made 28 starts in the regular season and his .818 winning percentage (18-4) was his second-best in a full season, just behind his '11 MVP campaign (.828).

**NL/MLB: Kyle Wright (ATL), 21**

Combining one of the best offenses in baseball and a breakout campaign from Wright, the Braves were nearly unbeatable when the 27-year-old righty took the mound. After going 1-4 in May, Wright only lost two games from there on out while allowing three earned runs or fewer in 17 of his 20 starts since the start of June.

**ERA**

**AL/MLB: Justin Verlander (HOU), 1.75**

In addition to piling up 18 wins, Verlander posted his best single-season ERA to date -- and the second-lowest by a qualifying pitcher in or after his age-39 season, trailing only **Cy Young**.

**NL: Julio Urías (LAD), 2.16**

Urías served as a steady presence atop a Dodgers starting rotation that dealt with injuries all year, posting the best season by ERA for a qualifying Dodgers pitcher since **Zack Greinke** had a 1.66 ERA in 2016.

**Strikeouts:**

**AL/MLB: Gerrit Cole (NYY), 257**

While Judge dominated the news cycle in New York this season, Cole set a new franchise mark of his own, surpassing the Yankees' single-season strikeout record (248) that **Ron Guidry** had held since 1978. Cole is also the first Yankee to lead the AL in strikeouts since **Al Downing** in 1964.

**NL: Corbin Burnes (MIL): 243**

The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner followed up with another excellent season, becoming the first pitcher in Brewers franchise history to lead either league in strikeouts.

**Saves:**

**AL/MLB: Emmanuel Clase (CLE), 42**

Clase was everything the playoff-bound Guardians could have asked for in 2022, posting a 1.38 ERA over a Major League-leading 77 appearances, recording a save in 42 of Cleveland's 92 wins on the year.

**NL: Kenley Jansen (ATL), 41**

While Jansen's 2022 season wasn't his best, it was still productive -- in his first year with the Braves, Jansen led the NL in saves for the second time in his career.

## **AARON JUDGE AND THE MAGIC 62**

I've grabbed bits from many articles including Joe Sheehan newsletter, Lindsey Adler of The Athletic, Joe Posnanski from his Joe Blogs newsletter, mlb.com, Ben Clemens in fangraphs.com, etc. There may be some overlap but the amazing season deserves reviewing a ton of tidbits.

When **Babe Ruth** set a new league record with his 60th home run of the 1927 season, the bombastic Bambino had thumped his chest, challenging the world to match that staggering total. An exhausted **Roger Maris** edged "The Babe" on the last day of the 1961 season, later expressing a feeling of "exultation" that the chase was over.

Sixty-one years after Maris captivated the baseball world with his pursuit of Ruth's beloved record, **Aaron Judge** now stands alone as the American League's single-season home run king. Three Yankees right fielders across three eras of baseball history, all having experienced the thrills of chasing a magnificent mark.

Judge hit his record-breaking 62nd home run on Tuesday at Globe Life Field, launching a 1-1 slider from Rangers right-hander Jesus Tinoco to open the second game of a split doubleheader. On a night when No. 99 hit No. 62, the Yankees' 3-2 loss gave them a record of -- wait for it -- 99-62.

Judge had been 9-for-39 (.231) with a homer, 18 walks and 15 strikeouts since hitting No. 60 on Sept. 20 against the Pirates

A crowd of 38,832 roared inside this gleaming, glassy structure on Texas' north side; Judge's parents, Patty and Wayne, were in attendance for the blast, as was his wife, Samantha, who wore a vintage T-shirt honoring the 1996 World Series championship.

Judge expressed some regret that he could not achieve the milestone at home; more than 137,000 fans attended the Yanks' final three regular-season home games, hoping to witness history.

In the Yankees' clubhouse, toasts were made in honor of Judge and **Gerrit Cole**, the latter of whom set the Yankees' single-season strikeout record by eclipsing **Ron Guidry's** 1978 total of 248. Cole struck out nine batters over six innings on Tuesday, bringing his season total to 257.

After looking at a ball and a strike, Judge unloaded on an 88.4 mph offering, slugging a Statcast-projected 391-foot drive toward the left-field seats. The ball, marked with 'C 13' for authentication purposes, was secured by Cory Youmans, a fan seated in Section 31, Row 1, Seat 3.

In the two weeks since Aaron Judge hit home run No. 59 in Milwaukee, 625,596 fans have come out to ballparks in New York City, Canada and Texas to watch him go for milestone home runs No. 61 and 62.

It took Judge an uncharacteristic 59 plate appearances to hit home runs 61 and 62, taking the race down to the penultimate game of the season.

For the rest of their lives, fans in New York (60), Toronto (61), and Texas (62) can tell their families: I was there. I witnessed history. The performance belongs to Judge, the experience belongs to the fans.

The sport has been played for more than 150 years and has featured nearly 23,000 players at the major-league level. Judge's 62nd home run secured for him an achievement that has been done only seven times in the history of baseball.

Judge's chase inevitably tied him to Maris, who was first racing against **Mickey Mantle**, then alone against the beloved Babe, in 1961. Judge spent his childhood watching **Sammy Sosa, Mark McGwire and Barry Bonds** hit 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, and 73 home runs — a slew of performances that revived the sport after the 1994 strike and is now the flashpoint of controversy given the admission and suspicion of the use of steroids by the players who spent three years serving as baseball's protagonists.

Forget the pedants who claim Maris' record is the "real" record and those who dismiss Judge's 62 home runs because it is still 11 fewer than were hit in a season by Barry Bonds. Those who were in the ballpark each night or glued to their televisions by choice did so because Judge's campaign represented something special.

In hitting 62 home runs in a season, Judge did something unfathomably difficult. In bringing the eyes of the sports world toward baseball, for the first time since the last home run chase over two decades ago, he did what had begun to feel remarkable.

As the Rangers put Judge's face on their scoreboard next to Maris and Ruth, as the fans in right field shouted "MVP" at him for the half-inning he played on defense after hitting his home run, as the sold-out crowd headed home from a night of history, it was simple: Judge was the draw, as he had been for two weeks, and here he had finally delivered.

For Judge an all-time free-agent walk year, hitting .311/.425/.686 over the course of 157 games. That includes the 15 games he spent at the center of the baseball universe, chasing a milestone while trying to remain steady and in control of his at-bats.

## JUDGE VS MARIS

Who hit for more power?

As mentioned, Judge gets the nod here by sheer home run volume. Simple math says 62 is more than 61, but the deeper numbers give Judge's 2022 season the edge as well.

Judge's record-breaker came in his 157th game of the season, while Maris reached his 61st (to break Babe Ruth's record) in his 161st game and the final game of the 1961 season. Judge's came on his 569th at-bat after drawing 111 walks, while Maris' came on his 588th at-bat after drawing 94 walks.

Outside of home runs, Judge also topped Maris in doubles (28 vs. 18), slugging percentage (.681 vs. .620) and total bases (390 vs. 366).

Better batting average?

Removing home runs from the conversation, can we determine which Yankees legend was a more complete hitter by looking at their batting averages?

While we saw Judge get the edge in slugging, the 2022 star also bettered Maris' 1961 mark in batting average (.311 vs. .269), total hits (175 vs. 159) and on-base percentage (.426 vs. .372).

Judge's ability to get on base in 2022 is greatly boosted over Maris' in 1961 based on the vast number of walks as he pursued the record, and the remarkable fact that Maris was not intentionally walked once in his record-breaking season. Guess it helps to have Hall of Famers hitting behind you.

Judge vs. Maris on the base paths

This is about home runs. Why should we care about base running? The easiest way to not run the bases, after all, is to hit it over the fence, right?

But when comparing Judge's and Maris' seasons, we can't ignore this aspect: Judge hasn't stopped hounding teams even when they keep him from homering.

While Maris was never a prolific base-stealer (21 career steals, zero in 1961), Judge has had his most thefts in his most powerful season. With 16 swipes on the season, Judge has set a career-high in 2022 and gets the definitive nod in this category.

How did Judge and Maris compare in the outfield?

The Yankees' outfield is one area where Maris' 1961 season likely reigns supreme compared to Judge's 2022 season.

A Gold Glove Award winner in 1960, Maris' errors climbed and fielding percentage dipped in 1961, but his assists total still outpaced Judge's from this season (nine vs. six) while Maris' time spent in the outfield is also an edge compared to Judge (1,402 innings vs. just over 1,120 innings).

Judge also has to get dinged in this category for playing 24 games as a designated hitter. Although the DH wasn't an option for Maris in 1961, as it wasn't around until 1973, Maris' reputation and consistency give him the upper hand here.

Who wins in WAR?

Always a controversial category, advanced numbers can't be ignored when looking at any modern-day player's impact.

Based on WAR, Maris wasn't even the Yankees' best player in 1961, as Mickey Mantle's mark of 10.4 wins led the team. Maris tallied 6.9 WAR that season, which is vastly outpaced by Judge's career-high 10.5 WAR this season.

In fact, Judge's 2022 season ranks as one of the 40 greatest seasons in MLB history based on WAR.

10 Judge home runs came off the first pitch of the at-bat. Judge doesn't wait to attack opposing pitchers as 26 of his homers have come within the first two pitches he sees.

Judge had 11 multi-homer games, which equals the big-league record with **Hank Greenberg** (1938) and **Sammy Sosa** (1998)—more than 18 teams this season. No hitter in baseball has punished pitchers more for running the count to 3-1, Judge had 7.

Judge hit 7 9<sup>th</sup> inning HRs.

Six pitchers gave up multiple HRs to Judge this season. **Jordan Lyles** of the Orioles (both on May 23), **Matt Swarmer** of the Cubs (both on June 11), **Colin Poche** of the Rays, **Tyler Wells** of the Orioles (both July 22), **Taijuan Walker** of the Mets and **Nick Pivetta** of the Red Sox.

Judge's longest home run of the season, a 465-foot towering dinger, cleared the visitor's bullpen in Camden Yards off Tyler Wells of the Orioles.

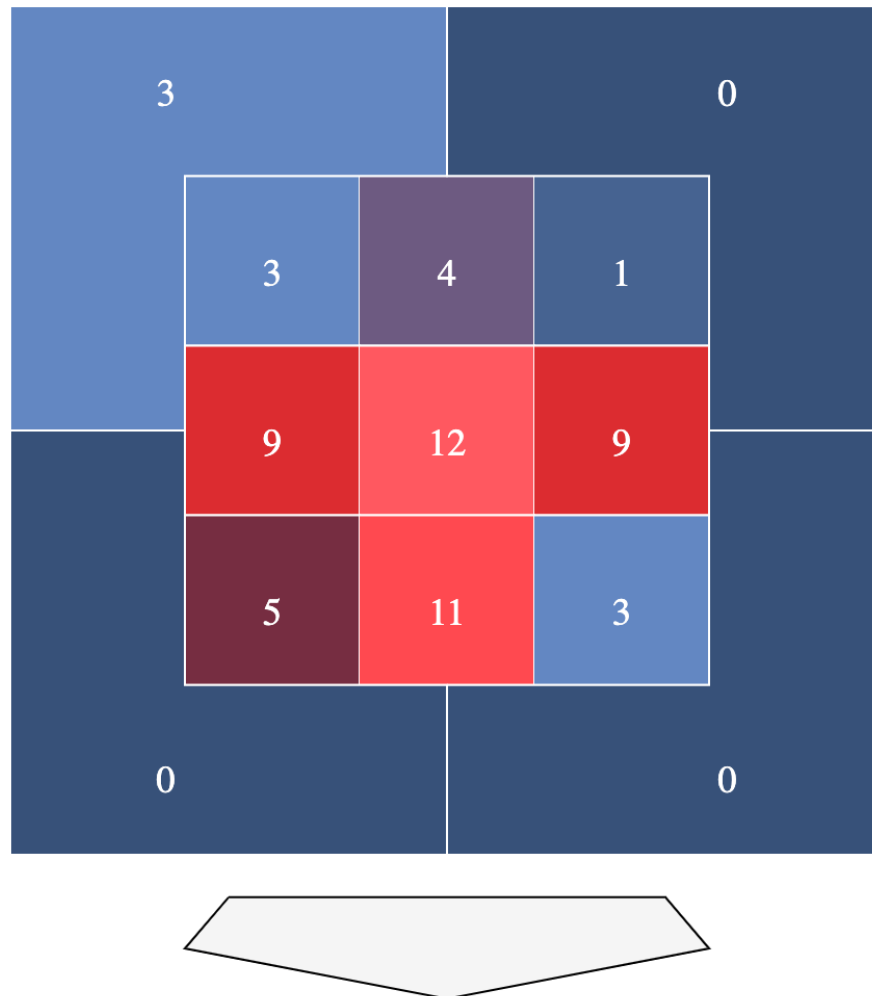
The hardest pitch Judge has hit for a homer this season came on Royals **Dylan Coleman's** 98.2 mph fastball. Judge has barreled a league-best 106 pitches this season, which is already a single-season Statcast Era record. Of those barrels, 58 have resulted in home runs.

Perhaps the most heartwarming of Judge's homers this season came May 3 in Toronto, where a Blue Jays fan caught the ball and then immediately handed it to a young Yankees fan wearing a Judge T-shirt. The young Yankees fan, named after **Derek Jeter**, and the Blue Jays fan who gave him the ball, met Judge during batting practice the following day in Toronto.

On May 10 at Yankee Stadium Judge battled back from an 0-2 count against Toronto's All-Star closer **Jordan Romano** and sent Romano's hanging slider 414 feet into the seats for his first walk-off home run this season.

# Aaron Judge

Home Runs By Zone



On June 11 against the Cubs the Yankees hit 6 HRs off Swarmer including 2 by Judge.

On June 27 Judge hit an extra innings three-run walk-off shot off Houston's **Seth Martinez**. It was Judge's second walk-off hit in this four-game series. "It ended up Judge 2, us 2," Astros manager **Dusty Baker** told reporters. "It's a bad feeling." It was the lowest pitch that Judge hit over the fence this season. (Judge's previous home run came on the highest pitch he has taken out.).

On July 16 there were 34 home runs hit in baseball on this day, but none of them were longer than Judge's 444-foot bomb off Boston's **Kaleb Ort's** slider.

On July 24 he took Baltimore's **Dean Kremer's** 75.6 mph curveball for a 456-foot ride. This Judge homer came off the bat at 111.1 mph, a difference of 35.5 mph from the velocity of the pitch itself, the largest gap of any of his dingers this season.

July 28 off **Scott Barlow** of the Royals, he tied Mickey Mantle on the Yankees' all-time walk-off home runs list with 39. It broke a scoreless tie in the bottom of the ninth.

July 29 off **Kris Bubic** of the Royals Judge became the first big leaguer to reach 40 home runs before the end of July since Barry Bonds and **Luis Gonzalez** in 2001, according to ESPN Stats & Info. Only two other Yankees have accomplished this and you may have heard of them: Babe Ruth in 1928 and Roger Maris in his record-breaking 61-home run season.

July 30 **Jonathan Heasley** of the Royals Judge became the second-fastest player to reach 200 career home runs, getting his in 671 career games. Only Philadelphia's Ryan Howard was quicker to the feat, needing 658 games.

Judge finished July with 13 home runs, the most for any hitter in baseball.

August 12 number 46. Judge has the second most career at-bats against **Nathan Eovaldi** with 28, just behind his 30 ABs against **Eduardo Rodriguez**. Unlike Rodriguez, who has had his number, Judge has a career 1.043 OPS against Eovaldi. In this encounter, Judge squared up a fastball and sent it over the Green Monster at 113.8 mph.

September 4 in Tampa, Judge's highest exit velocity homer of the season was just a casual 115.3 mph screamer to lead off the game off **Shawn Armstrong**.

September 20 **Wil Crowe's** mom called him the day after the Pirates right hander not only surrendered Judge's No. 60 but also a walk-off grand slam to **Giancarlo Stanton**. She wanted to check in to see how her son was mentally processing the night before. Crowe's wife reminded him how everyone has a bad day at work and how the moment didn't define who he was as a person at his core.

Just hours before Crowe became the first pitcher since 2001 to allow No. 60 to any hitter, he visited Monument Park with his family and posed for a picture in front of **Red Ruffing's** plaque. Ruffing is Crowe's great-great uncle and was teammates with Babe Ruth, whose own single-season career-high was 60 home runs. Crowe didn't grow up a Yankees fan, though his dad was a diehard until his son reached the big leagues.

September 28 in Toronto and **Tim Mayza** on the mound. The hardest-hit home run for Judge this season, at 117.4 mph, tied Roger Maris' single-season American League record at 61. It

took 3.8 seconds for Judge's rocket to clear the fence. Judge worked an 8-pitch at-bat against Mayza, tied for the longest at-bat of his season to end in a homer.

In Statcast, no-doubters are defined as homers that would be homers in all 30 big league ballparks. The majority of Judge's homers — 36 — fall within this category. That's tops in the majors.

I've burned through a lot of Aaron Judge material over the last month, and am mostly left with a sense of disappointment that his all-timer of a season has become an excuse to rehash old arguments, one endorsed by the league. Judge deserved better than to be tagged into that diseased conversation.

Whether he hit 58 or 65 or 74 homers, Aaron Judge posted a season for the ages this year. I'd imagine he'll sit today, with the Triple Crown probably out of reach -- he'd need a very big day to make up four points of batting average on **Luis Arraez**. If that's the case, he finishes as the league leader in OBP, SLG, total bases, runs, RBI, walks, OPS+, every form of WAR and, of course, home runs. His 211 OPS+ will rank sixth among players since 1961 over full seasons, behind four Barry Bonds campaigns and Mark McGwire's 1998. He's done this while carrying the burdens of moving to center field and batting leadoff, two new roles to which he's adapted well, and serving as the only good hitter in his team's lineup for much of the second half.

Gap between HR leader and 2<sup>nd</sup> place since 1900

| Year | Gap | Leader      | Runner-Up             |
|------|-----|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1921 | 35  | Babe Ruth   | <b>Bob Meusel</b>     |
| 1920 | 35  | Babe Ruth   | <b>George Sisler</b>  |
| 1926 | 26  | Babe Ruth   | <b>Hack Wilson</b>    |
| 1928 | 23  | Babe Ruth   | <b>Jim Bottomley</b>  |
| 1924 | 19  | Babe Ruth   | <b>Jack Fournier</b>  |
| 1932 | 17  | Jimmie Foxx | Babe Ruth             |
| 1919 | 17  | Babe Ruth   | <b>Gavvy Cravath</b>  |
| 2022 | 16  | Aaron Judge | <b>Kyle Schwarber</b> |

1933 14 Jimmie Foxx Babe Ruth

1965 13 **Willie Mays Willie McCovey**

1927 13 Babe Ruth Lou Gehrig

The great arrow of baseball time points inexorably towards more uniformity and more talent. It's a professional game; even the up-and-down bullpen arms and utility infielders of today work year-round at their craft, honing their bodies and minds in pursuit of fame and riches. In a sport where we measure success relative to a league baseline, that means it's harder than ever to stand out.

This arc of progress isn't some new phenomenon. Stephen Jay Gould, the late and celebrated biologist, wrote about it in 1986, though he framed it in terms of the extinction of .400 hitters. Standing out from the field simply gets harder with every generation because even the lesser lights of baseball now search for every possible edge.

To wit: wRC+, our marquee offensive statistic here at FanGraphs, considers a player's production relative to his peers. A 150 wRC+ has no fixed statistical translation. It merely means that a player's overall batting line is 50% better than the league as a whole. Judge's mark – 208 heading into today's action – means that he's 108% better than the overall league.

In Ruth's day, when dinosaurs walked the earth and many of baseball's best players weren't allowed to play in the same league as him, a 200 wRC+ wasn't particularly uncommon. But as competition increased, players lapped the rest of the field less often. Ruth and **Ted Williams** each had career wRC+ marks that approached 200. Since 1972, though, there have only been nine individual seasons that eclipsed 200:

Highest Single-Season wRC+, 1972-2022

| Year | Player       | wRC+ |
|------|--------------|------|
| 2002 | Barry Bonds  | 244  |
| 2001 | Barry Bonds  | 235  |
| 2004 | Barry Bonds  | 233  |
| 2003 | Barry Bonds  | 212  |
| 2022 | Aaron Judge  | 208  |
| 1994 | Jeff Bagwell | 205  |

1994 **Frank Thomas** 205

1998 Mark McGwire 205

2020 **Juan Soto** 202

Jeff Bagwell, Frank Thomas, and Juan Soto all accomplished their feats in shortened seasons. Bonds – well, he’s Barry Bonds. That just leaves Judge and McGwire out of the last half-century. Heck, order every season by wRC+ and exclude Bonds, and that gives Judge the best single season relative to his peers since Williams (223) and Mickey Mantle (217) posted similarly absurd seasons in 1957.

If I had my druthers, that’s how Judge’s season would be remembered. Sixty-two home runs is neat, and I’m glad he got there. A 16-homer lead on the field is spectacular, the stuff that only long-forgotten icons of the game have ever even dreamed of. But putting together an offensive season that blows away the rest of the league to this degree, at a time when his peers are as good as they are? Goodness gracious. We probably won’t see another season like Aaron Judge’s 2022 in our lifetimes. Let’s appreciate it.

#### JOE POSNANSKI ON JUDGE

Aaron Judge when he hit home run No. 62 off someone named Jesus Tinoco in someplace called Globe Life Field, deep in the heart of Texas.

“Judge stands alone,” Tom Verducci would write for *Sports Illustrated* after No. 62. “Bonds is the official home run champion. Judge is the authentic champion.”

“Technically, MLB still recognizes Barry Bonds as the record holder, and that’s not about to change,” Jon Heyman wrote in the *New York Post*. “But we know better.”

“Now ... it is Maris’ eldest son who favors something akin to a ‘distinctive mark’ to distinguish Judge’s A.L. record as the ‘clean’ mark over the scandal-scarred M.L.B. single-season record of 73 set by Barry Bonds,” *The New York Times* wrote.

Yes, there’s a powerful irony in Roger Maris’ own son asking for a distinctive mark to be placed on a home run record after the agony Maris himself endured when his own home run mark was dismissed with an asterisk ... but baseball does bring these sorts of feelings out of us, feelings you might call “judgmental nostalgia.”

By that, I mean people will choose to be nostalgic about some troubled eras in baseball history but not other ones (note: all eras in baseball history are troubled in one way or another). They will call the Selig Era of baseball inauthentic because MLB allowed and even encouraged players to use illegal performance-enhancing drugs and many players did so.

At the same time, they will call the segregated era of baseball fully authentic because, you know, that was America in those days and it wasn't the players' fault that MLB excluded players because of the color of their skin, and what are you going to do?

So Babe Ruth's 60 homers against all white players? Authentic. Wasn't his fault. Barry Bonds' 73 homers when many players were using PEDs and every element of the game was geared toward more home runs and owners were cashing the biggest attendance checks in baseball history? Inauthentic.

And so it goes on and on. Records set on amphetamines taken out of fish bowls in the clubhouse? Authentic. Records set on steroids when nobody was testing? Inauthentic. Records set by hitters who corked their bats? Authentic. Records set by pitchers who scuffed and cut and spit on baseballs? Authentic. Records set by players who quietly used PEDs but weren't officially caught? Authentic.

Judgmental nostalgia.

All of this was swirling around Aaron Judge for weeks — he had no more control over it than Roger Maris had over all those people who were still rooting for the Babe even 13 years after his death, no more control than Henry Aaron had over all those bigots who sent him death threats.

Home runs are precious things; each one requires a synthesis of so many rare things — recognition, concentration, timing, strength, wind, spin, luck — so not even the greatest and most powerful hitters who ever played this game can regularly summon one on command.

That's especially difficult under immense pressure. Judge surely felt that pressure deeply — the pressure of history, the pressure of Yankees' lore, the pressure of fixing what the PED era broke in the minds of so many baseball fans. In the end, he hit 62 home runs in a single season, an

utterly incredible thing, and he will let everybody make of it whatever they want. That's all a great home run hitter can really do.

Judge is now the Yankees' sole single-season home run record holder -- and the American League record holder. Maris' mark had stood as both records for 60 years.

- How about this amazing coincidence about Judge's record-setting homer? On the day that No. 99 hit No. 62, the Yankees' record went to 99-62.
- When Judge hit No. 60 at Yankee Stadium on Sept. 20, he became MLB's first 60-home run hitter since Barry Bonds set the MLB single-season record with 73 in 2001. (Sammy Sosa also hit 64 that year.)

There have only been nine 60-homer seasons in AL/NL history, by only six different players including Judge. Sosa had three, Mark McGwire had two and Bonds, Maris and Babe Ruth had one each. Judge is the third Yankee to do it; New York is the only franchise with multiple 60-home run hitters.

And 62-homer seasons? Judge is only the fourth Major League hitter to do that.

#### **Most HR in a season, MLB history**

1. Barry Bonds, 2001: 73
2. Mark McGwire, 1998: 70
3. Sammy Sosa, 1998: 66
4. Mark McGwire, 1999: 65
5. Sammy Sosa, 2001: 64
6. Sammy Sosa, 1999: 63
- 7. Aaron Judge, 2022: 62**

Judge is leading the MLB home run race by 16 home runs over the Phillies' Kyle Schwarber, who has 46. Judge's 16-homer margin over the second-place hitter is the largest since Jimmie Foxx's 17-homer margin over Ruth in 1932. Ruth holds the record for biggest gap between the No. 1 and No. 2 home run hitter, with 35 more than **George Sisler** in 1920 and 35 more than **Bob Meusel and Ken Williams** in 1921.

Judge's 62 homers have totaled a distance of 25,520 feet -- nearly five miles. That's enough to get from Yankee Stadium to the Central Park Zoo.

His total home run distance is a new record for a single season under Statcast tracking, which began in 2015. He passed teammate Giancarlo Stanton's total distance of 24,641 feet set in 2017, when he hit 59 home runs for the Marlins.

#### **Most total HR distance in a season, Statcast era**

- 1. Aaron Judge, 2022: 25,520 feet (62 HR)**
2. Giancarlo Stanton, 2017: 24,641 feet (59 HR)
3. Pete Alonso, 2019: 21,944 feet (53 HR)
4. Aaron Judge, 2017: 20,625 feet (52 HR)
5. Vladimir Guerrero Jr., 2021: 19,628 feet (48 HR)

Thirty-six of Judge's home runs have been "no-doubt" home runs -- that means they would be gone at all 30 MLB ballparks. The hitter with the next-most no-doubter home runs this year is Austin Riley, with 21.

- Judge's 61st home run, to tie Maris, was hit 117.4 mph -- his hardest homer of the season. It's the hardest home run Judge has hit since Sept. 30, 2017, the 52nd and final homer of his AL Rookie of the Year campaign. That one was hit 118.3 mph and went 496 feet.

- Judge's first 60 home runs were split perfectly between home and road games -- his 60th gave him 30 at Yankee Stadium and 30 away from it. Judge already holds the Yankee Stadium single-season home run record with the 33 he hit there in 2017; Maris (30 in 1961) and Gehrig (30 in 1934) are the others to hit 30 homers in one season at any of the Yankee Stadiums. (Babe Ruth hit 32 at the Yankees' home park of the Polo Grounds in 1921.)

Judge hit Nos. 61 and 62 in Toronto and Texas, respectively, bringing his season totals to 30 homers at home, 32 on the road.

Judge's 60th homer extended his lead for the most home runs hit at the current Yankee Stadium. He now has 115 there, two more than **Mark Teixeira's** 113.

- Judge has homered off 56 different pitchers this season, which is an AL record. He broke Ken Griffey Jr.'s previous mark of 52 in 1998. The all-time record is the 65 different pitchers McGwire homered against in that same iconic '98 season.

- Judge has hit 47 of his home runs out of the No. 2 spot in the batting order -- but he hit the milestone 60th, 61st and 62nd home runs as the leadoff hitter, as the Yankees sought to get him the most at-bats possible down the stretch, bringing his total to 13 in that spot (he also has two as the No. 3 hitter). His 47 homers as the No. 2 hitter are tied for the single-season record with Stanton in 2017.

#### **Most HR in a season as No. 2 hitter**

- 1. (tie) Aaron Judge, 2022: 47**
1. (tie) Giancarlo Stanton, 2017: 47

3. Eddie Mathews, 1959: 46
4. Mike Trout, 2019: 45
5. **Ryne Sandberg**, 1990: 40

• Judge's various game-changing home runs this season include:

- 4 leadoff home runs, including the record-setting No. 62
- 3 walk-off home runs, against the Blue Jays on May 10, the Astros on June 26 and the Royals on July 28
- 6 game-tying home runs, most recently in the eighth inning against the Red Sox on Sept. 13
- 19 go-ahead home runs, including No. 61, which broke a tie against the Blue Jays in the seventh inning, and No. 62, which opened the game against the Rangers

Here are Judge's 2022 home runs broken down in a few other ways:

- By platoon splits: 48 vs. RHP, 14 vs. LHP
- By month: 6 in April, 12 in May, 11 in June, 13 in July, 9 in August, 11 in September/October
- By direction: 31 pulled, 15 to center, 16 to opposite field
- By pitch type: 35 vs. fastballs, 22 vs. breaking balls, 5 vs. offspeed

As of last week

- Leading the American League in homers — by 23!
- Leading the AL in runs scored — by 30!
- Leading the AL in total bases — by 81!
- Leading the AL in RBIs — by eight!
- Leading the AL in walks — by 25!
- Leading the AL in extra-base hits — by 13!
- Leading the AL in OPS — by 104 points!
- Leading the AL in most times on base — by 39!
- With a chance to lead in all three Triple Crown categories — *and* all three slash-line triple-crown categories (OBP/SLUG/OPS).

Now let's try to place that list in historical context. I hope it grabs your attention. It definitely grabbed mine.

**Led his league in homers by 20-plus:** It would be just Judge and ... Babe Ruth.

**Led his league in runs scored by 30-plus:** Since 1900, it would be just Judge, **Rickey Henderson** and the Babe.

**Led his league in homers, extra-base hits, walks, runs and times on base by at least 10 (in all five categories):** It would be only Judge, Ruth and Ted Williams.

**Led the AL in the Triple Crown categories and the slash-line triple-crown categories (live-ball era):** If he can retake the lead in batting average, it would be just Judge, Williams and Lou Gehrig. (And nobody has done it in the National League since 1933.)

**Doubled the rest of his team in second-half OPS:** Finally, here's a mind-blowing window into how much the Yankees have needed Judge's Ruthian second half ...

**Second-half OPS:**

**Judge:** 1.321 (through Saturday)

**All other Yankees:** .653

### **JOE SHEEHAN NEWSLETTER—UNEXPECTED HEROS**

I have been thinking a lot about the randoms who drive playoff results, who create championship teams. I may not be doing previews for this round, but I am thinking about the games and preparing for the Division Series previews. Famously, **Billy Beane** said that his stuff doesn't work in the playoffs; I often wonder whether mine does.

Here's what I mean. Last year's Braves were thought to be weak in the bullpen and the outfield. What happened? **Will Smith and Tyler Matzek** combined to allow three runs in 24 appearances, while **Joc Pederson, Eddie Rosario, and Jorge Soler** took turns playing the hero for a month.

Two years prior, the Nationals were expected to be undercut by a weak bullpen. **Dave Martinez** got seven relief appearances from his top three starters and leaned heavily on his top two relievers in a spectacular example of how to exploit the playoff calendar. In the end, six pitchers threw 84% of the Nationals' postseason innings on their way to a championship.

The year before, it was the Red Sox pen under indictment. Like Martinez, **Alex Cora** tapped some starting pitchers -- every Sox pitcher on the roster relieved in that year's playoffs -- and got unexpectedly great work from **Joe Kelly, Matt Barnes, and Ryan Brasier**, none of whom has pitched as well since that October.

In 2014, the Royals were last in the AL with 95 home runs. Then they hit four in three games against the Angels in the Division Series, all at critical times. They hit four more in a sweep of the ALCS. The team defined by its lack of power turned into the 1961 Yankees for a week and won a pennant.

We expect surprise heroes in October. **Brian Doyle, Billy Hatcher, David Freese.** Baseball history is built on those stories and more. What we're getting more of, it seems, is these situations where a clear weakness becomes a critical strength overnight, for just long enough to define a playoff run, for just long enough to flip the tournament. Variance swamps everything, and never more than in the playoffs. We're never getting into the long run.

So when we talk about the randomness of October, in your mind, see **Eddie Rosario and Patrick Corbin and Joe Kelly and Eric Hosmer.** It's not that we don't know anything about these teams, it's that every player on a playoff team's roster is capable, for a game, for a week, for a month, of upending what we know.

(We shall see how the Guardians and the Cards do, considering that weakness of the Central divisions has been a theme in recent seasons. Teams from the Centrals have lost ten consecutive playoff series back to the 2019 Division Series, and no Central team has won a pennant since 2016. The unbalanced schedules are hiding the true performance gaps between playoff teams from the Centrals and the other divisions.

## **PLAYOFFS BETTING INPUT FROM VEGAS**

Vegas Information Sports Network

Adam Burke, VSiN's baseball analyst, on his approach to handicapping baseball changes once October comes around.

"Betting on the MLB playoffs is a much different beast than the regular season," he says. "It is a much tighter run environment and the game is managed more aggressively. Starting pitchers don't work as far into games and prominent relievers are sometimes deployed earlier depending on the importance of the situation. Handicapping the bullpen is always important, but it is magnified at this time of the year.

"Pregame wagers are less about making a bet and more about taking a position. Think about it like a starting point. Because these games often feature a lot of different high-leverage situations and pitching changes, live betting is a good strategy. There will be huge momentum swings and game-changing home runs that create in-game betting equity. The games are staggered in a way that makes them easy to follow. Every single pitch matters and that's true of betting on these games as well."

## ADDING CONTEXT, RATHER THAN ASTERISKS, TO THE RECORD BOOK

The so-called steroid era complicates discussion of Aaron Judge's 62-homer season, but as with other issues, it is a cause for explanation rather than the rewriting of history.

Scott Miller, NYT

When Roger Maris Jr. declared that **Aaron Judge** should be the single-season home run king with his 62nd blast and that "baseball should do something" to make it so, it further extended the pretzel logic that has fueled debates surrounding the sport for more than six decades — and originated with his father.

In a game that treasures both its home run records and comparative analysis, perfect symmetry remains difficult to replicate when eras are different and the sport keeps changing.

When **Roger Maris** clouted his 61st home run of 1961 to pass **Babe Ruth** and set the Major League Baseball single-season record, the American League had moved to a 162-game schedule from 154 (the National League followed suit one season later).

It was then-Commissioner Ford Frick who first brought up the idea of placing "some distinctive mark in the record books" to denote that Maris's mark was set in a season that extended eight games beyond the schedule that Ruth's Yankees had played. He said this pre-emptively in July 1961 after Maris smacked his 35th homer to move some three weeks ahead of Ruth's record pace. Notably, Frick did not use the word "asterisk." But that word quickly became shorthand to describe the spirit of his sentiment.

Now, 61 years later, it is Maris's eldest son who favors something akin to a "distinctive mark" to distinguish Judge's A.L. record as the "clean" mark over the scandal-scarred M.L.B. single-season record of 73 set by **Barry Bonds** in 2001.

There has been no official comment from baseball's current commissioner, Rob Manfred, nor is there expected to be one, said a person with knowledge of his thinking who was not authorized to speak publicly. But the "asterisk" idea has stubbornly persisted in public debate over the years through changing numbers and transformative circumstances. With it, the so-called steroid era persistently ripples through modern times.

Instead of an asterisk, the broadcaster Bob Costas, honored with the Ford C. Frick Award at the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2018 for his decades of excellence, promotes the idea of an introductory page that would be placed at the beginning of baseball's official record book.

“It would read,” Costas said, “something to the effect of, ‘Baseball has the longest and richest history of any American sport. Over time, the game has gone through many changes, among them segregated, integrated, entirely day ball, mostly night ball, 16 teams and now 30 teams, train travel, cross-country air travel, higher mound, lower mound, reliance on relief pitchers, analytics, and significant among them the so-called steroids era in which many performances, especially by power hitters, were disproportionate to any other era in baseball history. Fans may want to take into account all those facts when considering the records reflected in the pages that follow.’”

Costas favors that approach over an asterisk because “then you’d have to consider asterisks for other circumstances.”

Others don’t think the sport needs to go down the asterisked path of separating records from each other because, as the journalist and author Howard Bryant said, “there already are emotional asterisks that exist.”

“No. 1 is 1947. By mentioning the year, there’s the asterisk,” said Bryant, author of a definitive book on the steroid era, “Juicing the Game” as well as biographies of **Henry Aaron and Rickey Henderson**. “It was the year Black players got to play. So you know if it’s pre-1947, all those great players, Lou Gehrig never got to play against Black players, **Honus Wagner** never did, Babe Ruth never did. Conversely, Black players never got a chance to prove themselves against white players.”

Maris’s record of 61 homers stood for 37 summers, until **Mark McGwire** hit 70 and **Sammy Sosa** 66 in 1998. Three years later, Bonds smashed 73 to break the record again. Sosa had two other seasons of 60-plus homers and McGwire one, all within that 1998-2001 span. M.L.B. did not begin testing players for performance-enhancing drugs with penalty until 2004.

“We know with Sosa’s numbers, there’s an asterisk just by mentioning his name,” Bryant said. “Ditto for Bonds, McGwire, **Rafael Palmeiro** and the rest of them.

“So the only issue is while we are living, we all understand it. But when we’re gone, people who don’t remember it may not associate those years with an asterisk. I think that’s OK. If we’ve done our jobs as chroniclers and storytellers, then history will remember this time for what it was. And then history will change and it will shape and it will reshape as history always does.”

Home runs have fueled imaginations throughout the game’s history, and the sanctity of those particular records always has been paramount to fans relative to most other marks. As Costas noted, one year after Maris surpassed Ruth, the Los Angeles Dodgers’ **Maury Wills** stole 104 bases to break **Ty Cobb**’s modern record of 96, set in 1915. Frick was still the commissioner in

1962, and though it was the first season of the National League's move to 162 games from 154, he did not involve himself as he did with Maris and Ruth.

Another recent example resides in the Yankees clubhouse with a teammate of Judge's. When the reliever **Zack Britton** established the A.L. record by converting 60 consecutive save opportunities in 2017 for the Baltimore Orioles, he was still 24 behind **Eric Gagne's** M.L.B. record. Gagne, who pitched for the Los Angeles Dodgers in the National League, was later linked to steroids through the Mitchell Report in 2007 and did not deny it. That led some to suggest that Gagne's record should be struck down and Britton's upheld as the true mark.

Britton disagrees and still recognizes Gagne's record as the true standard. He applies the same thinking to the home run record.

"People at the time were like, 'Do you think that's still the record?' and I said it was," Britton said of Gagne's mark. "It's the record until it's not. What Bonds did is the record, too."

Even in the pandemic-shortened, 60-game season in 2020, M.L.B. did not consider special denotations for its statistics.

"In baseball there is neither crying nor the asterisk," John Thorn, M.L.B.'s official historian, said in an interview then. "No excuses, no pointless shorthand directing you to wrinkle your nose."

### **JAYSON STARK UNCOVERS THE WEIRDEST STUFF**

**AIN'T IT A SHANE** — It was a historic day in Cleveland for all sorts of reasons, not the least of which was ...

*It was the first postseason game in history in which the starting-pitching matchup **was Shane (Bieber) versus Shane (McClanahan)**!*

Same-name matchups in postseason history:

**Four Bob-versus-Bobs** involving **Bob Buhl, Bob Turley, Bob Friend, Bob Ojeda and Bob Knepper**.

**Three Ed-versus-Eds** involving **Ed Reulbach, Ed Walsh, Ed Siever and Ed Killian** (all between 1906-08).

**Three Don-versus-Dons** involving **Don Larsen, Don Newcombe, Don Gullett and Don Sutton**.

**Three Dave-versus-Daves** involving **Dave McNally, Dave Boswell, Dave Stewart and Dave Stieb**. And that isn't even counting the **David (Cone) versus David (Wells)** duel in the 1996 ALCS.

**Three John-versus-Johns**, which all involved **John Smoltz and John Smiley**, in 1991-95.

**And assorted other Steve, Jim, Frank, Mike and Andys**, but ...

**In the 21st century**, we've had just three of these:

**2020 AL Wild Card Game 2 — José Urquidy versus José Berríos**

**2021 ALDS Game 1 — Lance Lynn versus Lance McCullers Jr.**

**2022 AL Wild Card Game 1 — Shane Bieber versus Shane McCann**

But hold on. None of that is even the Weird and Wild part, because we need to sum all the scoring in this Guardians-Rays game, when, in the sixth inning ...

**Jose (Siri) homered off Shane (Bieber) ...**

After which ...

**José (Ramírez) homered off Shane (McCann).**

First time in postseason history that two hitters with the same first name homered off two pitchers with the same first name in the same game. The Shane of it!

### **HOW IMPRESSIVE WAS THE MARINERS GAME TWO COMEBACK?**

In clinching a two-game sweep and advancing to face the Astros in the AL Division Series, Seattle joined an exclusive postseason club. Only five teams had previously climbed back from at least six runs down to win a playoff game.

Here is a look at those breathtaking comebacks, the biggest in postseason history.

### **8 RUNS**

#### **1. A's, 1929 World Series Game 4**

*Down 8-0 in 7th, beat Cubs 10-8*

Philadelphia had won the first two games of the Fall Classic, but Chicago got one back and then jumped out to a big lead in Game 4 at Philly's Shibe Park, threatening to even the series. **Kiki Cuyler's** RBI single made it 7-0 heading into the bottom of the seventh.

But the A's didn't fold, finally getting to Cubs starter **Charlie Root** when Hall of Famer **Al Simmons** led off with a home run. Five of the next six batters singled, making it an 8-4 game and knocking out Root. **Mule Haas** then greeted reliever **Art Nehf** with a three-run, inside-the-park homer to make things really interesting. By the time **Jimmy Dykes** smacked a go-ahead two-run double to give the A's a 10-8 lead, the Cubs were on their fourth pitcher of the inning. The 10-run frame remains tied for the second-biggest in postseason history.

Hall of Famer **Lefty Grove** shut down the Cubs over the final two innings for the save, and Philadelphia clinched its championship in Game 5.

## 7 RUNS

### 2 (tie). Mariners, 2022 AL Wild Card Series Game 2

*Down 8-1 in 6th, beat Blue Jays 10-9*

This was a Mariners team that went 20 seasons without playing a single postseason game, building the longest active playoff drought in the sport. So when Seattle finally claimed a Wild Card spot, it would have been easy to adopt a "just happy to be here" mindset. So much for that.

After jumping out to an early lead and holding on to win Game 1 of the best-of-three series in Toronto, the Mariners fell into a cavernous hole in Game 2, thanks in part to two **Teoscar Hernández** homers. But Seattle was not deterred, finally tying the score with a four-run eighth. The key play was a two-out, bases-loaded pop fly off the bat of **J.P. Crawford** that dropped and brought home three runs when the Blue Jays' **Bo Bichette** and **George Springer** crashed into each other in the outfield. **Adam Frazier** delivered the go-ahead RBI double in the ninth, and rookie starter **George Kirby** came in to nail down the save and send Seattle to the ALDS.

### 2 (tie). Red Sox, 2008 ALCS Game 5

*Down 7-0 in 7th, won 8-7*

Facing a seven-run deficit in the seventh inning and on the brink of elimination, the Red Sox electrified Fenway Park with a stirring comeback against Tampa Bay. Mr. Clutch for Boston, **David Ortiz**, smashed a three-run homer in a four-run seventh, and **J.D. Drew** launched a two-run shot in a three-run eighth that pulled the Sox even. Drew's heroics were just beginning -- he delivered a walk-off single in the bottom of the ninth to lift the Red Sox into Game 6. Boston won that game as well, but fell in Game 7.

## 6 RUNS

#### **4 (tie). Cardinals, 2012 NLDS Game 5**

*Down 6-0 in 3rd, won 9-7*

**Adam Wainwright** was hit hard early in this game, but St. Louis began chipping away with a run in the fourth, two in the fifth, one in the seventh and one more in the eighth. In the bottom of the eighth, the Nationals added an insurance run to take a 7-5 lead into the ninth, but the Cards got a pair of clutch two-run singles from **Daniel Descalso** -- who had homered earlier in the game -- and **Pete Kozma** against Washington's closer, **Drew Storen**. **Jason Motte** then came on in the ninth to close it out with a 1-2-3 frame to send St. Louis to the NLCS.

#### **4 (tie). Yankees, 1996 World Series Game 4**

*Down 6-0 in 5th, won 8-6 (10 innings)*

The Yankees found themselves down two games to none in their first World Series appearance in 15 years, but beat the Braves in Game 3 at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium before falling into a 6-0 hole by the fifth inning of Game 4. Undeterred, New York started chipping away in the sixth, scoring three times in that frame before **Jim Leyritz** belted a three-run, game-tying homer in the eighth. The Yanks staged a two-out rally in the 10th, taking advantage of **Steve Avery's** loss of command and sloppy Braves defense. That proved to be the difference and the Yankees never looked back, winning a pair of one-run games to win the World Series in six games.

#### **4 (tie). Dodgers, 1956 World Series Game 2**

*Down 6-0 in 2nd, won 13-8*

The Yankees jumped out to a six-run lead by the second inning at Ebbets Field thanks in large part to a **Yogi Berra** grand slam in the second. But Brooklyn answered immediately with a six-run bottom of the second to tie the game and the slugfest was on. The Dodgers only needed three extra-base hits in the contest -- a pair of **Gil Hodges** doubles and a two-run homer by **Duke Snider** in the second -- to erase the deficit and win by five. Brooklyn lost the series, however, in seven games, unable to repeat as champions after defeating the Yankees the prior October.

#### **THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE**

Want to feel old? **Roberto Clemente** got his 3,000<sup>th</sup> hit 50 years ago. In honor of Clemente and Cabrera, a 3K hits question. 33 players have had 3,000 or more hits in the majors.

Clemente is the only right handed batter to reach 3,000 playing less than 20 seasons.

Four left handed batters surpassed 3,000 hits and played less than 20 seasons. Here are the years they reached 3K, name the 4 hitters.

Though he played the majority of his career in the AL, this lefty got his 3,000<sup>th</sup> hit while playing for the Marlins in 2016.

1999 this AL infielder reached 3,000 hits in his 18<sup>th</sup> and final season.

1985 this AL infielder played 19 seasons.

1979 this NL outfielder wrapped his 19 year career.

**2016 Ichiro Suzuki** (3089 in 19 seasons)

**1999 Wade Boggs** (3010 in 18 seasons)

**1985 Rod Carew** (3053 in 19 seasons)

**1979 Lou Brock** (3023 in 19 seasons)

### **HOUSEKEEPING**

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