

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

2.29.2023

Good morning baseball fans,

This week R.I.P. **Tim McCarver**, rule changes commentary, **Hank Aaron**, triple crowns, Joe Namath, more two sport athletes and trivia.

So please grab a coffee and enjoy.



THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Arizona State has produced more MLB draft No. 1 overall picks (four) than any other school, starting with Rick Monday in the very first Draft in 1965. Which of these Sun Devils stars was *not* the top selection in his Draft?

- A. **Floyd Bannister**
- B. **Bob Horner**

- C. **Reggie Jackson**
- D. **Spencer Torkelson**

Mudcat Grant won 21 games for the 1965 Twins and said he had joined the “Black Aces”. 14 other black pitchers had one or more 20 game win seasons. How many can you name?

Mike Trout ranks fourth among active players with 350 home runs. Who are the three players ahead of him?

Since 2017, only one batter in baseball has had multiple seasons with at least 120 RBIs. Name this 28 year old right-handed National League slugger.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Great comment from Tom Verducci in Sports Illustrated--Nobody bought a ticket to watch analytics departments crunch numbers. Every sport must balance innovation—or in today’s parlance, the hacking of the sport—against entertainment. A thumb must always be placed on the entertainment side of the scale.

Two Pro Football Hall of Famers who have played in a World Series--**Jim Thorpe** (1917 World Series with the Giants) and **Deion Sanders** (1992 World Series with the Braves)

NFL MVP Patrick Mahomes is son of former MLB reliever **Pat Mahomes**. Pat pitched 11 seasons (1992-2003) for the Twins, Red Sox, Mets, Rangers, Cubs and Pirates. He pitched in 313 games including 63 starts. He went 42-39 with a 5.47 ERA, 452 K’s and 392 BB. In 1999 for the Mets he threw 8 innings across 4 post-season games.

The last pitcher to lead the Major Leagues in strikeouts in back-to-back seasons--**Justin Verlander**, DET (2011-'12)

Houston struck out 71 Phillies in 6 World Series games last fall—all-time record.

It has to be tough to be an Oakland A's fan. the A's, who lost 102 games in 2022 and are projected to be one of the worst teams in baseball in 2023. It's a sharp fall for a team that made the playoffs in six of the nine seasons from 2012-2020, and ten times total this century. The A's won 97 games as recently as 2018 and 2019, played at that pace in the shortened 2020 season, and were in the wild-card mix deep into September 2021. Things have changed in a hurry in Oakland. The A's gave at-bats to 33 players. Just three had an OPS+ above the league average of 100, and one of those did it in just 40 PA.

Crummy stadium. Underfunded ownership. This is not the **Reggie-Vida-Catfish** A's or even the **Canseco-McGwire** A's. As Joe Sheehan wrote: The A's, like the Marlins for a decade of their existence, are no longer a baseball team. They're a front for a real-estate play. John Fisher has stripped the team, openly courted a much smaller market more willing to build him a ballpark, and all but sprayed the seats at Oakland Coliseum with Ebola. The A's projected payroll in 2023, about \$75 million, will be comparable to what it was in 2013.

The Coliseum does need replacing, but the Coliseum *site* is a good one, with plenty of road and transit options and the space to build a new park while using the old one in the interim, like the Mets did in Queens. The A's and Fisher are focused on a site that would enable the kind of non-baseball development that makes owners richer and has no relevance to the ballclub.

The A's playing 162 games is merely what has to happen to keep the franchise going until Fisher gets the cash cow of his dreams. It's a miserable situation. A sport with real leadership would do more than just point to Las Vegas with one hand while pointing a gun at the city of Oakland with the other. Alas, baseball hasn't had that since Walter O'Malley died.

Life is very different down the coast for Padres fans. The Padres had already had a stunning offseason, signing **Xander Bogaerts, Matt Carpenter, Nick Martinez and Robert Suarez** for \$364 million in combined guarantees. Then they signed **Seth Logo** for \$15 million. Then extended **Yu Darvish**—6 years and \$108 million. Then they added **Michael Wacha** for 4 years/\$24 million. The they signed **Cole Hammels** to a minor league deal for depth. **Manny Machado and Juan Soto** can opt for free agency in 2024 so ownership is all in right now.

The Mets and Yankees live in a metro area of 19 million people. The Dodgers and Angels 13 million. With 3 million the Padres are 17th. If I am in Tampa, Baltimore, Denver, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland or Kansas City (all with more than 2 million people in their respective metro areas) I would ask ownership where is the commitment like San Diego? (or St. Louis also with between 2 and 3 million but a serious payroll).

Most MLB starts as a teenager--**Bob Feller** (36 starts as a 19-year-old in 1938)

The Dodgers announced on Saturday that the organization will retire **Fernando Valenzuela's** No. 34 jersey this summer during a three-day "Fernandomania" celebration.

The Mexican left-hander was a member of two World Series teams during his career, won the 1981 NL Rookie of the Year and Cy Young Awards, was selected to six All-Star teams and took home two Silver Slugger Awards as he became one of the best-hitting pitchers in the Majors. Valenzuela's number was recognized in the team's Ring of Honor, along with **Pee Wee Reese** (No. 1), **Tommy Lasorda** (2), **Duke Snider** (4), **Gil Hodges** (14), **Jim Gilliam** (19), **Don Sutton** (20), **Walter Alton** (24), **Sandy Koufax** (32), **Roy Campanella** (39), **Jackie Robinson** (42), **Don Drysdale** (53) and Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully.

Valenzuela posted a 3.31 ERA in 331 appearances in a Dodger uniform, six All-Star appearances to his name. What he captured in his Cy Young rookie season, which saw him hurl 11 complete games with eight shutouts, the defining image of a world championship season in 1981

Valenzuela pitched 17 seasons in the majors going 173-153. He was 141-116 in 11 seasons with the Dodgers. In 1981 he threw 8 shutouts, 11 complete games and led the majors with 180 strikeouts.

The Tampa Rays are celebrating their 25th season. Besides throw back Devil Rays jerseys they are starting the Rays Hall of Fame. This season, the Rays will induct an inaugural class of **Don Zimmer** (Sunday, April 2 vs. Detroit Tigers), **Wade Boggs** (Sunday, July 9 vs. Atlanta Braves) and **Carl Crawford** (Saturday, August 26 vs. New York Yankees). Boggs played two seasons and 213 games for the Rays, hitting .289 for two last-place teams. Nonetheless, Tampa Bay retired his No. 12 in 2000.

Who is the only manager in baseball who has had his current job for more than 10 years? The answer? Cleveland's **Terry Francona**, who was hired in October 2012 to take over for Manny Acta. Every other manager has been on the job for fewer than 10 years. In fact, more than half of the managers in baseball have had their current job for fewer than five years: a whopping 11 have managed their team for only one season or less.

Four new managers for 2023

Chicago White Sox

New Manager: **Pedro Grifol**

Age: 53

Previous Experience: Bench coach for the Royals

Texas Rangers

New Manager: **Bruce Bochy**

Age: 67

Previous Experience: Manager for Padres and manager for Giants, with whom he won three World Series

Miami Marlins

New Manager: **Skip Schumaker**

Age: 43

Previous Experience: Bench coach for the Cardinals, first-base coach for the Padres

Kansas City Royals

New Manager: **Matt Quatraro**

Age: 49

Previous Experience: Bench coach for the Rays

Most HRs in a season by a Yankee second baseman—did you get them in order?

Alfonso Soriano	39 home runs in 2002 and 38 in '03
Robinson Cano	33 in 2012
Joe Gordon	30 in 1940
Gleyber Torres	24 in 2022

Tony Lazzeri hit 18 four times, **Billy Martin** 15, **Gil McDougald** 14, **Bobby Richardson** never hit more than 8, **Willie Randolph** topped out at 7, **Horace Clarke** 6.

Reading about **Zack Britton**'s attempted comeback, some impressive stats jumped out. From 2014-20, Britton notched a superhuman 1.84 ERA in 367 1/3 frames. He punched out 24% of his opponents against a 9.2% walk rate in that time, and Britton's 76.2% ground-ball rate over that period cemented him as the best ground-ball pitcher since 2002, when batted-ball data of that nature began being carefully tracked. Britton posted a laughable 80% ground-ball rate in 2016 and was at 79.1% in 2015 and 77.2% in 2019 — the three highest single-season marks ever posted by a qualified pitcher.

The Rangers have had six straight sub-.500 finishes. This off-season they added — **Jacob deGrom, Nathan Eovaldi, Andrew Heaney and Jake Odorizzi** — The four of them combined for 67 starts last year. So is this staff going to dominate the AL West or the AL injured list?

They added four key starters for \$263 million, added to the \$556 million they spent (on position players last winter). The cost of rebuilding is expensive. Just ask the Mets -- spent \$423.17 million at Steve Cohen's favorite Free Agent Super Store. ... The Padres laid out almost \$300 million to display **Xander Bogaerts, Michael Wacha, Matt Carpenter, Seth Lugo** and other assorted friends in their free-agent showroom. ... The Cubs signed *nine* free agents to major-league contracts, to deals worth north of \$300 million.

Think Phillies fans are pumped that they signed **Trea Turner** to play shortstop? Over the last three seasons Turner cranked out more extra-base hits than **Mookie Betts**, more singles than anybody in the sport and more stolen bases than anyone except **Starling Marte** — with a slash line (.316/.364/.514) matched by **Freddie Freeman**.

The Mets spent half a billion dollars this off season but didn't sign **Jacob de Grom** (who signed with Texas for five years/\$185 million). Those 40 missed starts over the last two seasons worried Cohen more than the Rangers.

This never ceases to impress me. Talk about dominance—In 1927 Babe Ruth hit more home runs than any AL team hit for the season.

1. **Babe Ruth**, 60 homers
2. Philadelphia A's (whole team), 56
3. St. Louis Browns, 55
4. Detroit Tigers 51
5. **Lou Gehrig**, 47
6. Chicago White Sox, 36
7. Washington Senators 29
8. Boston Red Sox 28
9. Cleveland Indians, 26

Maybe not the best time to piss off your ace. With players beginning to report to spring training, now is a time typically filled with unbridled positivity and enthusiasm. But speaking to reporters Thursday, Brewers ace **Corbin Burnes** struck a different, more uneasy tone.

Burnes—who just lost his arbitration hearing with Milwaukee, and will now make \$10.01 million rather than the \$10.75 million he and his camp asked for—was asked whether any harsh feelings existed between him and the only organization he's ever played for. With his response, he did not mince words.

“There’s no denying that the relationship is definitely hurt from what [transpired] over the last couple weeks,” Burnes said. “There’s really no getting around that.”

For Milwaukee’s sake, let’s hope both sides find a way to maneuver. Burnes is unquestionably one of the game’s best pitchers, and he took issue with what he characterized as the Brewers’ “disrespectful” handling of the arbitration hearing. While this is merely one vaguely worded side of the story, it’s worth revisiting the age-old topic of how and why teams choose to undertake these head-to-head financial battles with their own employees.

Of course, not every player shares the same sentiments that Burnes did here. But is the \$740,000 the Brewers will save this season worth this kind of burned bridge? Burnes noted that everybody involved is professional and will handle themselves as such going forward. Time will tell how that plays out. But despite Milwaukee’s winning the arbitration hearing, it’s hard to shake the notion that both sides are walking away feeling like they’ve lost something. Think about it-- Burnes is a player Milwaukee drafted and developed, and at 28 he’s a two-time All-Star with a Cy Young Award. Burnes will be a free agent after this season and Milwaukee’s best move may be to trade him before he leaves for a team that better appreciates him. That doesn’t serve Brewers fans very well.

140-RBI seasons by decade:

- 1921-30: 21 seasons (led by **Hack Wilson’s** 191 in 1930)
- 1931-40: 24 seasons (led by **Lou Gehrig’s** 185 in 1931)
- 1941-50: 5 seasons (led by **Vern Stephens’** 159 in 1949)
- 1951-60: 4 seasons (led by **Al Rosen’s** 145 in 1953)
- 1961-70: 8 seasons (led by **Tommy Davis’** 153 in 1962)
- 1971-80: 1 season (**George Foster** drove in 149 in 1977)
- 1981-90: 1 season (**Don Mattingly** drove in 145 in 1985)
- 1991-00: 26 seasons (led by **Manny Ramirez’s** 165 in 1999)
- 2001-10: 17 seasons (led by **Sammy Sosa’s** 160 in 2001)
- 2011-present: ZERO.

Yeah, that’s right: zero. The most RBIs in a season was **Miguel Cabrera’s** 139 in 2012, followed by **Chris Davis’** 138 in 2013. Big RBI seasons have mostly gone away. This is surely because fewer and fewer hitters are getting on base, batting averages have gone way down, **Mike Trout** and some of the other great hitters in the game can’t stay healthy for a full season.

Skimming the OBP career leader list.

61 players have a career on base percentage over .400

Ted Williams number one at .4817 ahead of runner-up **Babe Ruth** .4739. No surprise.

Lou Gehrig, Rogers Hornsby, Ty Cobb, Jimmie Foxx, Tris Speaker, Eddie Collins, Shoeless Joe Jackson all top 20.

10 of the top 61 played during the last 50 years:

Barry Bonds	7 th
Frank Thomas	21
Edgar Martinez	22
Wade Boggs	26
Mike Trout	28
Todd Helton	29
Joey Votto	33
Manny Ramirez	36
Jeff Bagwell	44
Lance Berkman	48
Jim Thome	56
Rickey Henderson	58
Chipper Jones	59
Larry Walker	60

Stephen Strasburg signed a seven-year, \$245 million deal that began in 2020. In the first three seasons of the contract, Strasburg has made eight starts — he's 1-4 with a 6.89 ERA — and there isn't even a timetable for his return. He has allowed 24 earned runs over 31⅓ innings. Strasburg turns 35 in July and is signed through 2026

There are a lot of jokes about **Miguel Cabrera** being in the best shape of his life. This is an annual gag, going back more than a decade, as Cabrera always seemed to report to camp in the best shape of his life. This is the last year of Cabrera's contract (assuming he doesn't finish top 10 in the MVP voting, which is probably a fair assumption) and everything he does this season will just add to the stats that they will put on his Hall of Fame plaque.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum announced Friday that **Scott Rolen's** Cooperstown plaque will feature a Cardinals cap and **Fred McGriff's** plaque will feature no team's logo.

Rolen and McGriff will be formally inducted into the Hall of Fame on July 23 in Cooperstown, N.Y. Each player's plaque will be revealed immediately prior to each electee's induction speech on that day.

Rolen will become the 12th player to don a Cardinals cap on their Hall of Fame plaque. He played six of his 17 MLB seasons in St. Louis, winning three Gold Gloves and earning four All-Star selections while there. Rolen also captured his only World Series ring with the 2006 Cards. He played 183 more games for the Phillies but had 32 playoff games for St. Louis and none in Philadelphia.

McGriff, who was elected by the Contemporary Baseball Players Era Committee on Dec. 4, played for six teams over 19 seasons. His career was fairly evenly split as he spent five years each with the Blue Jays, Braves and Rays. He also played three seasons with the Padres, two with the Cubs and one with the Dodgers.

First Hall of Famer to be inducted with a Cardinals cap on his plaque--Pitcher **Dizzy Dean** (1953).

Willie McCovey, Frank Thomas and Ted Williams all hit 521 home runs.

Ernie Banks and Eddie Mathews both hit 512 HRs

Lou Gehrig and Fred McGriff both hit 493 HRs

Stan Musial and Willie Stargell both hit 475 HRs

Jose Canseco and Adam Dunn both hit 462 HRs

Jeff Bagwell and Vladimir Guerrero both hit 449 HRs

Juan Gonzalez and Andruw Jones both hit 434 HRs

Andres Galarraga and Al Kaline both hit 399 HRs

Frank Howard and Ryan Howard both hit 382 HRs

Buck Showalter has been Manager of the Year in four different decades, but has never managed in a World Series.

HOT SEAT

The Athletic polled its baseball writers—who is on the hottest hot seat?

CHAIM BLOOM/RED SOX FRONT OFFICE (20 VOTES): Pretty much everyone in baseball likes Chaim Bloom, the beleaguered chief baseball officer of the Red Sox. But when a guy rakes in this many votes in a survey like this, we think it's safe to say *this isn't going well!* The fan base is in rebellion. The rest of the industry is generally confused about why a money-making machine like the Red Sox would lowball a local hero like **Xander Bogaerts**, then turn around and overpay an unknown quantity like **Masataka Yoshida**. But the conclusions were the same: If this team doesn't win ... uh-oh. "Here's his problem," said one voter of Bloom. "When (principal owner) John Henry is feeling the heat and (team chairman) Tom Werner is feeling the heat, they'll throw anybody under the bus."

The poll also asked Phenoms to Watch this spring

Gunnar Henderson (Orioles): 13
Corbin Carroll (Diamondbacks): 11
Andrew Painter (Phillies): 9
Jordan Walker (Cardinals): 8
Grayson Rodriguez (Orioles): 7
Anthony Volpe (Yankees): 6
Francisco Álvarez (Mets): 6

SURVEY SAID: How bright is the future of this sport? So bright that 25 phenoms got votes in this category. But it felt like the gushing over Carroll was at another level. "I won't be shocked if he makes the All-Star team," an AL exec said. And how about this from an NL exec: "It's not just speed. It's game-changing speed. But he's also a five-tool guy. I haven't seen anyone run like him who can also play like him."

Contracts and Markets

Observations from Joe Sheehan--Largest contracts in baseball history and the city of the team that signed the player. (All data from Cot's Contracts).

Mike Trout	\$427M	Los Angeles
Mookie Betts	\$365M	Los Angeles

Aaron Judge	\$360M	New York
Francisco Lindor	\$341M	New York
Fernando Tatis	\$340M	San Diego
Bryce Harper	\$330M	Philadelphia
Giancarlo Stanton	\$325M	Miami
Corey Seager	\$325M	Texas (Dallas/Fort Worth)
Gerrit Cole	\$324M	New York
Rafael Devers	\$314M	Boston
Manny Machado	\$300M	San Diego
Trea Turner	\$300M	Philadelphia

Of the 12 teams to sign a player to a \$300 million contract, eight play in the game's five largest media markets. The two Padres signings stick out, as San Diego plays in the fourth-smallest media market of any baseball team.

Of these 12, four were cases of a team retaining a player it developed. None were cases of a small-city free agent leaving for a big city. Two, the Francisco Lindor and Gerrit Cole contracts, were for players who started their careers with small-city teams and were traded.

Expanding the range, there have been 31 contracts of at least \$200 million signed in baseball history. Here's how they break down, dividing the league into thirds based on this data.

Large market: 13

Medium market: 10

Small market: 8

VEGAS ODDS

Want to get down a futures bet on World Series winner?

Astros	+650
Dodgers, Mets, Yankees	+750
Padres, Braves	+1000
Blue Jays, Phillies	+1400
Mariners	+1600
Guardians, Rays, White Sox, Cards	+2500

Angels, Twins, Brewers	+4000
Giants, Rangers	+5000
Red Sox	+6000
Orioles	+6600
Cubs	+8000
Marlins	+10000
Diamondbacks, Tigers	+12500
Royals	+15000
Pirates, Rockies	+20000
Reds	+25000
Nationals, A's	+50000

IMPACT OF SHIFTS ON LEFTY BATTERS

Tom Verducci, Sports Illustrated

As we await the impact of banning shifts, looking back the adoption was slow at first—only 12% of pitches in 2017. Then shifts more than doubled in just two years, to 26%. And then it became mainstream as teams invested more resources in analytics and saw how much it depressed offense. Over the past three years the shift rate was 32%—but most importantly, 52% to lefties. Overall last year there were 4,080 100-mph rocket outs against the shift, about *four times as many* as in 2015 (1,067).

To worsen matters, while the shift took away hits from left-handed hitters, the flow of lefties into the big leagues declined. There are fewer left-handed hitters in MLB than at any time in the past two decades. From 2013 to '22, at bats by lefties dropped 12%. They accounted for 44% of at bats a decade ago but only 39% last year.

Here is how badly The Shift Era destroyed left-handed hitting:

- Since the mound was lowered in 1969, there had never been a season with as few as 10 left-handed hitters with 150 hits. Then it happened in 2021. And again in '22. That was half as many as there were in '17 (20) and less than a quarter as in '98 (43).
- Left-handed hitters' on-base percentage (.309), batting average (.236) and wOBA (.306) last season were the worst in at least 21 years.
- Yankees left-handed hitters last year set the template to how the shift skewed the traditional reward system: Don't try to hit through it; try to hit over it. They hit just .214 while leading the majors in fly-ball percentage and pull percentage and finishing last in ground-ball percentage. Nearly one quarter of their hits from lefthanders were home runs (24%).
- The big-picture proof of the skewed reward system: left-handed hitters last year had 4,088 fewer hits than they did in 2009, a decline of 21%. They lost 29 points off their

batting average (.265 to .236) and 22 points when they put the ball in play (.305 to .283). But they did hit home runs at a higher rate.

- Blue Jays left-handed hitters hit just 20 home runs and had 202 hits. Both totals were fewer than **Charlie Blackmon** had by himself in 2017. They have since added **Daulton Varsho, Kevin Kiermaier and Brandon Belt**, all lefties.
- Twenty-five free agents signed contracts of three years or more this winter. Only two were left-handed hitters with big-league experience: **Brandon Nimmo** (8 years, \$162 million) and **Andrew Benintendi** (5 years, \$75 million), neither of whom has ever hit more than 20 homers or driven in more than 90 runs. A third lefty batter, **Masataka Yoshida**, signed with the Red Sox for five years and \$90 million after playing seven professional seasons in Japan.

Ah, but now there is hope. Twelve of the top 29 draft picks last year were left-handed hitters, plus two switch-hitters. The baseball world that **Jackson Holliday, Termarr Johnson** and the other lefties of their generation will inherit is set up to be a fairer and more entertaining one.

Chris Sale of the Red Sox has two teammates (**Ryan Brasier** and **Rafael Devers**) who were members of the 2018 championship team and four (**Kiké Hernandez, Kenley Jansen, Justin Turner**, and **Alex Verdugo**) who played for the Dodgers that season.

In addition to the other well-publicized rules changes for this season, MLB is cracking down on how often position players can pitch.

Under the new rules, a position player can be used any time in extra innings, when his team is leading by 10 or more runs in the ninth inning, or when his team is trailing by eight or more runs.

Last season, position players could pitch in extra innings only with a six-run differential.

Position players appeared on the mound 89 times in 2021, then 132 times in 2022.

Call this the **Hanser Alberto** Rule. The Dodgers used the infielder 10 times as a pitcher in 2022.

Jose Altuve standing on the new bases



Mets pitching coach **Jeremy Hefner** thought almost all offseason about how to configure the Mets' rotation. The average age of the team's top five starting pitchers is 35. Their combined salary in 2022 is \$129.3 million. How can the Mets keep them healthy throughout the six-month regular season, and if all goes according to plan, a month of postseason play as well?

Hefner pondered a six-man rotation. He pondered non-traditional alternatives such as openers and piggyback starters. But for now, at least through April, the Mets plan to rely solely on their big five — **Justin Verlander** (40 on Monday); **Max Scherzer** (39 in July); **Carlos Carrasco** (36 in March); **José Quintana** (34); and Japanese newcomer **Kodai Senga** (30).

The sturdiness of that group likely will determine the success of a team carrying a luxury-tax payroll of \$373.7 million, about \$80 million over the highest threshold — you know, the one the league ostensibly sought to slow down the spending of Mets owner Steve Cohen. The total outlay for the 2023 Mets currently projects to at least \$450 million in combined salary and tax penalties, an unprecedented number. And still the team is hardly certain to win its first World Series since 1986, in part due to the age and injury risk in its rotation.

To understand the difficulty of what the Mets are trying to accomplish, even with two future Hall of Famers in their rotation, consider how rarely teams have produced seasons of 20 or more starts from five pitchers who were entering their age 30 seasons or older.

Only 10 clubs have managed such a feat. Only three — the 2002 Yankees (with **Roger Clemens, Mike Mussina and Andy Pettitte**), 2002 Diamondbacks (with **Randy Johnson and Curt Schilling**) and 2013 Angels (with **Jered Weaver and C.J. Wilson**) have done it this century. They don't make starting pitchers like they used to. Forty-two pitchers threw 200 innings in 2002. Just eight reached that total last season, a mere two decades later.

Verlander (3370) and Scherzer (2815) rank first and third, respectively, in innings pitched among active pitchers, including their postseason totals. (**Zack Greinke** is second with 3360). Quintana is 12th and Carrasco is 26th.

Rest may be key. Last season:

Verlander

5 starts on 4 days rest (0.90 era)

16 starts on 5 days rest (2.47)

7 starts on 6+ days rest (0.63)

Scherzer

9 starts on 4 days rest (2.34)

10 starts on 5 days rest (2.26)

4 starts 6+ days rest (2.25)

THE BASEBALL 100

One benefit of waiting on a replacement tv to be delivered is I get to dive back into Joe Posnanski's book The Baseball 100 about his top 100 players of all time. (I highly recommend it)

Some random highlights:

1997 **Larry Walker** hit .366/.452/.720 with 46 doubles, 49 HRs, 130 RBIs, 143 runs scored, 33 stolen bases. MVP, Gold Glove.

1998 he hit .363 with 46 double and 113 RBIs, won another Gold Glove.

1999 he hit .379, slugged .700 again, hit 37 HRs, 115 RBIs, scored 108 runs, won another Gold Glove.

From 1997 to 2002 he hit .353/.441/.648. These are **Ted Williams**/**Stan Musial** numbers. Even playing at altitude at Coors Field it is very impressive.

Career Defensive WAR

Ozzie Smith 44.2

Mark Belanger 39.5

Brooks Robinson 39.1

Cal Ripken 35.7

Joe Tinker 34.3

No one else is close.

Lowest Career Slugging PCT

Ozzie Smith .328

Rabbit Maranville .340

Luis Aparicio .343

Omar Vizquel .352

Nellie Fox .363

Marino Rivera

141 post-season innings pitched. 0.70 ERA. He allowed post-season homeruns. Allowed 1 run in his last 24 post-season appearances.

Lowest draft choices to make the Hall of Fame

Mike Piazza	62 nd round	1988
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John Smoltz	22 nd round	1985
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Ryne Sandberg	20 th round	1978
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Jim Thome	13 th round	1989
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Nolan Ryan	12 th round	1965
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Sadaharu Oh

Won 13 straight home run title in Japan, 8 of them by 10 or more HRs Two triple crowns. Walked at least 18 times in 16 straight seasons. Hit 868 HRs. Career OPS of 1.080. Had an OPS over 1.000 16 straight seasons. Nine times he slugged over .700. At age 37 he hit .324/.477/.706 with 50 HRs in a 140-game season.

MORE JOE POSNANSKI

(from his newsletter)

Sandy Koufax is widely seen as the essential all-peak Hall of Famer. He was the best pitcher in baseball for three full seasons, plus two more injury-plagued seasons, plus one season (1961) that has become underrated through the years. That's basically his whole Hall of Fame case — six seasons when he was definitively the best, or arguably the best, pitcher in baseball. I'd say just about everybody thinks that makes him not only a Hall of Famer but an inner circle one.

Don Sutton, meanwhile, is widely seen as the essential compiler Hall of Famer. Sutton was never the best pitcher in baseball. He did lead the league in ERA one year, and he finished top five in Cy Young voting five times, but he spent most of his career just being a good-to-very-good pitcher. It's just that he did that for such an absurdly long time — I'd say he had 17 or 18 good seasons in his career — that he ended up winning 300 games and getting elected to the Hall of Fame relatively easily.

There are certainly more people who are skeptical of Sutton's Hall of Fame worthiness than Koufax's, but again I think the majority of people think Sutton is a Hall of Famer. I mean 300 wins is 300 wins.

So my idea is to create this Koufax-to-Sutton scale; what I'm looking for is a simple and logical good-season-to-great-season conversion rate. Is 10 good seasons worth five great seasons? Fifteen? In WAR, it probably is. In compiler stats such as pitcher wins, it definitely is. But I can't help but think that a core purpose of the JoeBlogs Hall of Fame is to recognize greatness. Sutton has a higher WAR than Koufax. Sutton won almost twice as many games as Koufax. But, and I mean no disrespect to a terrific pitcher, in my view, Don Sutton is nowhere near as good a Hall of Fame candidate as Sandy Koufax.

Maybe I don't need a conversion chart. Maybe this is already covered in my "contribution to baseball" category — Koufax would definitely be a chapter in the great book of baseball and Sutton might not be mentioned at all.

BROADWAY JOE WAS NEARLY WRIGLEY JOE

Manny Randhawa, mlb.com

When **Bill Mazeroski** launched a walk-off home run to win the 1960 World Series at Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, an iconic moment was born: The baseball sailing over the ivy-covered wall as **Yogi Berra**'s chase morphed into a dejected jog back to the visitors' dugout is an image embedded in the minds of baseball fans everywhere.

About 30 miles north of where that was taking place, a 17-year-old high school baseball player was jubilant -- his beloved Pirates had just upset the heavily favored Yankees in a seven-game series that put the "Classic" in "Fall Classic."

Less than a year later, that high school outfielder was in the very same batter's box as Mazeroski was in when he connected for the historic homer. The prep star was taking swings during batting practice ahead of the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League high school baseball championship between Beaver Falls and Elizabeth Forward.

As he took his pregame cuts, Joe Namath was living a dream.

"One of my highlights was being able to hit one out in batting practice over the left-field wall at Forbes," Namath said. "My teammates got a big kick out of that."

Surely, his teammates were jokingly uttering the name "Namath" in the same breath as "Mazeroski" as it became clear the ball was loosely following the path of the most celebrated home run in Pirates history. Little did they know that Namath would someday eclipse their beloved "Maz" in athletic fame while under the brightest of lights in New York City.

Namath went 2-for-3 in the championship game to lead Beaver Falls to the WPIAL title, the first in school history. And that was after he hit .450 during the regular season.

Sure, he was a tremendous high school quarterback, not to mention a standout basketball player. But long before he famously won Super Bowl III over the Baltimore Colts after guaranteeing his underdog Jets would be victorious, and long before he became "Broadway Joe," one of the most famous quarterbacks in pro football history and one of the most recognizable athletes on the planet, baseball was Namath's first love. And **Roberto Clemente** was his hero.

"As a kid, maybe 11 or 12 years old, I started watching Roberto," Namath said. "He just was so graceful to me, the way he ran and the way he'd slide into third or second -- he'd start that slide about five yards away, man. Oh, he was just wonderful. And catching the ball -- I even mimicked his style of catching a fly ball, which was similar to **Willie Mays**' basket catch, but it was because of Roberto that I used it so much."

For young Joe Namath, there was so much to take in: not only the Long home run and seeing the legendary Clemente out in right field, but getting the chance to watch **Stan Musial** hit. "The

Man” would go down as one of the greatest sluggers in the game’s history, smashing 475 home runs and winning three National League MVP Awards, seven NL batting titles and three World Series rings with St. Louis during a 22-year Hall of Fame career.

“‘Stan the Man’ was in the box, and boy, he hit a shot into the outfield to score a run,” Namath said. “I’m so glad I got to meet and visit with Stan ‘The Man’ Musial later on in my life. He was always so sweet. I’ll never forget meeting him at Oakmont [Country Club] for a golf tournament with Arnold Palmer. He was so soft and gentle and had a smile that just made you feel so good.”

During one high school game in 1961, Namath looked up in the stands behind the Beaver Falls' dugout and saw a man watching him more intently than everyone else. That man was a second-year Dodgers scout named **Tommy Lasorda**.

“Tommy and I talked quite a bit, even years afterward, about him coming to town,” Namath said. “Yeah, Tommy was scouting me out -- every time I would see Tommy in later years, we’d talk about it. He remembered my hometown and sitting in the bleachers and all kinds of stuff.”

There was no MLB Draft back then; it wouldn’t be established for another four years. The Dodgers never ended up offering Namath a professional contract, but there were four MLB clubs that did: the Athletics, Orioles, Cubs and Cardinals.

The Cardinals scout who recommended that St. Louis offer Namath a contract was Ollie Vanek. Vanek’s greatest find was a high school pitcher out of Donora -- a small town just south of Pittsburgh -- whom he convinced the Cards to turn into an outfielder (and later a first baseman). His name was Stan Musial.

But St. Louis’ offer to Namath wasn’t the biggest. The Cubs held that distinction, offering him \$50,000 (about \$470,000 today). It was enticing, and Namath wanted to take it and begin the pro baseball career he had dreamed about for years.

“Getting an offer for the amount of money Mom and Dad would have to work 10 years for, that was a big amount of money back in 1961,” Namath said. “And I loved the game.”

Namath had a ton of scholarship offers to play football and considered several schools, visiting Notre Dame, Michigan State, Iowa, Miami and Arizona State. He even ended up signing a letter of intent to matriculate at another school he visited, one that was only 300 miles or so away from home: the University of Maryland.

But he didn’t go.

“I was holding out,” Namath said. “I was home when school was starting because I wanted to play baseball.”

Namath could only hold out for so long, and predictably, Mom won. But as he was preparing to leave home for Maryland, a knock at the door changed the trajectory of his life.

“It just so happened that one morning, while we’re getting ready toward the time to leave, someone came to the front door,” Namath said. “It’s a good-sized guy, and he introduced himself as Howard Schnellenberger, assistant coach at the University of Alabama.

Namath was off to Alabama and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Jets selected Namath with the first overall pick in the 1965 AFL draft (the St. Louis Cardinals -- the football Cardinals -- chose him with the 12th overall pick of that year’s NFL draft) and he would become a five-time Pro Bowl quarterback, the MVP of Super Bowl III and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1985.

Still, Namath has often thought about what it would’ve been like if he had taken the Cubs’ offer in 1961.

In June 2018, Namath visited Wrigley Field for the first time in his life, throwing out the ceremonial first pitch to then-Cubs manager **Joe Maddon**. On that occasion he had a chance to tour the venerable ballpark, and the man who left so many people awe-struck over the years was himself struck with awe just outside the right-field entrance.

“I just marveled at Ernie Banks’ statue out there by the stadium,” Namath said.

Namath and Banks could very well have been teammates had Namath stuck with baseball. Imagine a Cubs lineup with **Banks, Billy Williams, Ron Santo, Lou Brock** and this Namath kid everyone had been raving about.

HANK AARON

A reminder of how great his career was

Andrew Simon, mlb.com

20 seasons of 20 homers

One surprising aspect of Aaron’s 755 career home runs is that he produced them without hitting more than 47 in a single season. A total of 49 players have produced a higher single-season total than Aaron ever did -- 16 of them multiple times -- and yet Aaron sits second on the all-time list behind **Barry Bonds**.

Aaron managed that through his relentless consistency. He is one of five players to post at least eight 40-homer seasons, one of two (along with **Alex Rodriguez**) to have 15 30-homer seasons

and is the only player to go deep 20-plus times in 20 different years. Those years came consecutively from 1955-74. Aaron failed to reach that threshold only as a 20-year-old rookie in 1954, and as a 41- and 42-year-old in 1975-76.

Nearly 3,300 games

You don't hit 755 home runs without being a paragon of durability and longevity. Aaron's 3,298 games played puts him 10 behind **Carl Yastrzemski** for second all time. (**Pete Rose** is No. 1 with 3,562 games.) Aaron played at least 150 games 14 times and at least 120 games 21 times, tying Rose for the most such seasons in MLB history. Aaron also ranks third in plate appearances (13,941).

Productive at 20 and 40

One thing that stands out about Aaron is that he was a tremendous young player *and* a tremendous old player. As for the former, he is one of 25 position players to produce a 6-WAR season at age 21 or younger, per Baseball-Reference, and is tied for 10th in total WAR through age 25 (38.7). But he is *also* tied for eighth in WAR at age 35 or older (31.4). Aaron's two highest single-season OPS figures actually came at ages 37 (1.079) and 39 (1.045, albeit in only 120 games). In the five seasons from 1969-73, when Aaron was 35-39 years old, he led all Major Leaguers in slugging (.601) and OPS (.997).

Top 5 in many categories

In addition to home runs, games and plate appearances, Aaron ranks third all-time in hits (3,771), fourth in runs scored (2,174), first in total bases (6,856), first in extra-base hits (1,477), first in RBIs (2,297), fourth in intentional walks (293) and fifth in WAR for position players (143.1). He is one of seven players to reach the hallowed milestones of 3,000 hits and 500 homers, after **Miguel Cabrera** joined the club in 2022.

A hit machine: 3,000 hits without the HR

Take another look at that hit total: 3,771. It doesn't take a mathematician to figure out what that means. Even if you took away each and every one of Aaron's 755 home runs, he *still* would have cracked the 3,000-hit mark -- one of the most celebrated in baseball. Homers aside, Aaron's 3,016 hits would rank 30th in MLB history. The player who would be behind him? **Wade Boggs**, a Hall of Famer who batted .328 over 18 seasons, with a total of 3,010 hits.

The King of Total Bases

Think about those 6,856 total bases, too. That total is 722 more than second-place **Stan Musial** -- about twice the amount produced by 2021 Major League leader **Vladimir Guerrero Jr.** (363). How much is 6,856? It equates to 1,714 home runs, 2,285 triples or 3,428 doubles. If a player matched Ruth's single-season record of 457 total bases and kept that up for 15 years, he would still be one base short of Aaron.

1. Henry Aaron, 6,856 total bases
2. **Albert Pujols**, 6,211

3. **Stan Musial**, 6,134
4. **Willie Mays**, 6,080
5. **Barry Bonds**, 5,976

And a lot of At Bats

Aaron went to the plate more times than all but two players in baseball history, and he hit more home runs than all but one. Despite that, his lack of strikeouts is stunning -- especially by modern standards. Aaron finished with 1,383 K's (fewer than his 1,402 walks), which is only the 119th most in MLB history and fewer than several active players have. Of course, Aaron played in a lower-strikeout environment in which pitchers did not have the caliber of stuff they do today. Even so, Aaron also struck out far less than fellow Hall of Famers such as **Reggie Jackson** (the all-time leader, with 2,597), **Willie Stargell** (1,936) and **Mickey Mantle** (1,710).

15 straight years of 6 WAR

Aaron wasn't making all of those All-Star teams just from inertia. Beginning with his second season in 1955, he produced at least 6 WAR in 15 straight years through 1969. For context, only 13 position players reached that mark in 2022, which is about average for a single season. That 15-season streak is a record, and Aaron's 16 total seasons meeting the 6-WAR threshold ties Bonds for the most by a position player.

October excellence: 1.116 postseason OPS

Aaron didn't get many chances to play in the postseason, but when he did, he took advantage by batting .362/.405/.710 with six homers and 16 RBIs in 17 games. In two of his three series (1957 World Series, 1969 National League Championship Series), he homered three times. Among those with at least 70 career postseason plate appearances in the AL/NL, he ranks fifth in average, fourth in slugging and fifth in OPS.

It was noted above Aaron is career leader in RBIs.

1. Henry Aaron, 2,297 RBIs
2. Albert Pujols, 2,218
3. **Babe Ruth**, 2,214
4. Alex Rodriguez, 2,086
5. **Cap Anson**, 2,075
- 6.

Top RBI men over last 10 seasons:

1. **Nolan Arenado**, 968
2. **Paul Goldschmidt**, 934
3. **Nelson Cruz**, 889
4. **Jose Abreu**, 863
5. **Anthony Rizzo**, 832

Mike Trout's 10th on this list, by the way.

Aaron had seven years with 120-plus RBIs, including four seasons in a row from 1960 through '63. Over the last six seasons, only one player has had multiple 120-RBI seasons.

Aaron received MVP votes in 19 straight seasons (1955-73)

Aaron was selected as an All-Star in 21 seasons (1955-75), more than any other player. He started a Midsummer Classic 17 times, behind only **Willie Mays** (18).

TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS

(Posnanski comments)

American and National League Triple Crown winners and the distance between them and the second-place batter in each category:

1901: Nap Lajoie — Average .426 (+.86), homers 14 (+2), RBIs 125 (+11)

Fun fact: Only year Lajoie ever led the league in homers.

1909: Ty Cobb — Average .377 (+.30), homers 9 (+2), RBIs 107 (+10)

Fun fact: Only year Cobb ever led the league in homers.

1912: Heinie Zimmerman — Average .372 (+.14), homers 14 (+2), RBIs (+3)

Fun fact: Only year Zimmerman ever led the league in average or homers. He did lead the league in RBIs again in 1916 and 1917.

1922: Rogers Hornsby — Average .401 (+.47), homers 42 (+16), RBIs 152 (+20)

1925: Rogers Hornsby — Average .403 (+.36), homers 39 (+15), RBIs 143 (+13)

Fun fact: Hornsby led the league in homers twice. He hit .400 both years and was the Triple Crown winner both years.

1933: Jimmie Foxx — Average .336 (+.20), homers 48 (+14), RBIs 163 (+23)

*Fun fact: Foxx would have won back-to-back Triple Crowns except in 1932, someone named **Dale Alexander** — who was traded midseason from Detroit to Boston — batted .367. Alexander had only five big league seasons, but he hit .331 for his career before a leg injury pushed him to the minor leagues.*

1933: Chuck Klein — Average .368 (+.19), homers 28 (+1), RBIs 120 (+14)

Fun fact: Klein hit .467, banged 20 of his 28 home runs and slugged .790 at home in the ridiculous ballpark that was the Baker Bowl. He hit .280 and slugged .436 on the road.

1934: Lou Gehrig — Average .363 (+.07), homers 49 (+5), RBIs 166 (+24)

Fun fact: Gehrig finished FIFTH in the MVP voting that season.

1937: Joe Medwick — Average .374 (+.10), homers 31 (tied Mel Ott), RBIs 154 (+39)

Fun fact: This was the only time someone in the NL won a Triple Crown with a tie.

1942: Ted Williams — Average .356 (+.25), homers 36 (+9), RBIs 137 (+23)

1947: Ted Williams — Average .343 (+.15), homers 32 (+3), RBIs 114 (+16)

Fun fact: Williams led the league batting average six times, homers four times and RBIs four times.

1956: Mickey Mantle — Average .353 (+.8), homers 52 (+20), RBIs 130 (+2)

Fun fact: Mantle finished top four in RBIs only one other time — that was 1964, when he finished third.

1966: Frank Robinson — Average .316 (+.09), homers 49 (+10), RBIs 122 (+12)

Fun fact: This was the only year that Robinson led the league in any of the Triple Crown categories.

1967: Carl Yastrzemski — Average .326 (+.15), homers 44 (tied Harmon Killebrew), RBIs 121 (+8)

Fun fact: This was the only time someone in the AL won a Triple Crown with a tie.

2012: Miguel Cabrera — Average .330 (+.04), homers 44 (+1), RBIs 139 (+11)

Fun fact: Across the board, I'd call this the closest Triple Crown of them all.

TWO SPORT PLAYERS, PART II

Bo Jackson

Kansas City Royals, 1989 All-Star Game MVP with a dazzling two-way display of offense and defense. Incredibly, Jackson averaged 5.5 yards per carry in the NFL while also hitting 32 homers and driving in 105 runs in 1989. Two years later, a devastating hip injury while playing for the Raiders derailed what could have been several more years of dual-sport brilliance.

Deion Sanders

Known to many as "Primetime," Sanders had incredible speed that made him a two-sport star in the 1990s. Teams would famously avoid throwing to Sanders' side of the field when he played cornerback for the Falcons, 49ers and Cowboys, while opposing hitters saw deep drives go to waste when the rangy Sanders patrolled the outfield for the Yankees, Braves and Reds. At 21 years old, Sanders memorably hit a home run for the Yankees and scored a touchdown for the Falcons in the same week in 1989. He is also the only athlete to play in both the Super Bowl and the World Series, going 8-for-15 in four games for the Braves in the 1992 Fall Classic, and winning the Super Bowl with the 49ers and Cowboys.

Brian Jordan

Jordan is one of the most recent examples of a two-way star. He led the Falcons in tackles and was named an alternate to the Pro Bowl as a defensive back in 1991 before switching to baseball full-time the following year. He unquestionably made a greater impact on the diamond, spending 15 seasons with the Cardinals, Braves, Dodgers and Rangers. St. Louis fans will recall Jordan's game-winning home run in Game 4 of the 1996 National League Championship Series, and the outfielder earned his lone All-Star Game selection with Atlanta three years later. Jordan finished his career as a .282 hitter with 184 home runs.

George Halas

The story of football in Chicago begins with "Papa Bear" Halas. The Windy City native founded the Bears franchise and co-founded the NFL in 1920, and served as a player, coach and owner for the Monsters of the Midway -- all at the same time. Die-hard Yankees fans will recall that Halas also played 12 games in pinstripes in 1919, manning right field in the Bronx just before the arrival of one George Herman Ruth. Halas joined Thorpe as an inaugural inductee to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1963.

Ernie Nevers

Nevers was regarded as one of football's best triple threats during the 1920s for his ability to run, pass and kick. He was a four-sport star at Stanford, excelling at baseball, basketball, and track and field. Nevers was a right-handed pitcher for the St. Louis Browns while also starring for the NFL's Duluth Eskimos, compiling a 6-12 record and 4.64 ERA on the mound from 1926-28.

Drew Henson

Henson is the most recent athlete to make the top level in both sports. He was named Baseball America's high school player of the year in 1998, and the Yankees drafted him in the third round that year and paid him a \$2 million signing bonus -- even with the understanding that he was committed to playing football for the University of Michigan. Henson split time with Tom Brady as quarterback of the Wolverines, and ultimately appeared in eight big league games for the Yankees from 2002-03. He started the Dallas Cowboys' Thanksgiving Day game in 2004 and suited up for the Lions in '08.

Bo Jackson is one of only two former Heisman Trophy winners to appear in a Major League game. The other was 1950 winner Vic Janowicz, who played two seasons with the Pirates after leaving Ohio State before returning to football with Washington.

There is only one member of both the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Pro Football Hall of Fame. That would be **Cal Hubbard**, who is one of only 10 umpires enshrined in Cooperstown and also played linebacker for the Giants, Packers and Steelers.

Legendary pitcher **Christy Mathewson**, one of the inaugural five members of the Baseball Hall of Fame, played fullback for the Pittsburgh Stars professional football team in 1902 (18 years before the founding of the NFL).

Only seven athletes have appeared in both professional sports since the NFL merged with the AFL in 1970: **D.J. Dozier**, Henson, **Chad Hutchinson**, Jackson, Jordan, **Matt Kinzer** and Sanders.

Danny Ainge

Ainge is the most famous modern athlete to play in both MLB and the NBA, manning second base for the Blue Jays between 1979-81 before winning multiple NBA titles with the Celtics and later starring for the Kings, Trail Blazers and Suns. Ainge became just the second player in NBA history to successfully make 900 three-point shots, and he served as the Celtics' GM and president of basketball operations until retiring in June 2021.

Gene Conley

Conley collected plenty of hardware, capturing three NBA titles with the Celtics from 1959-61 while also contributing to the Braves' 1957 World Series championship as a pitcher.

Chuck Connors

Connors is actually known mostly for his work as an actor, playing Lucas McCain in ABC's "The Rifleman" from 1958-63. But Connors also helped lead the Rochester Royals to the 1946 NBL Championship before later joining the Celtics of the newly formed BAA. Connors promptly left the Celtics to play for the Dodgers, breaking in with Brooklyn in 1949. Connors was also drafted by the Chicago Bears, but he never played in an NFL game.

Dave DeBusschere

The defensive heart and soul of the Knicks' revered championship teams of 1970 and '73, DeBusschere was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1983. The forward also pitched for the White Sox from 1962-63.

Dick Groat

Trivia nuts will recognize Groat as the 1960 NL MVP, a season in which he hit .325 for the world champion Pirates. But Groat was also a two-time All-America basketball player at Duke University, and went on to play one season for the Fort Wayne Pistons in 1952.

Steve Hamilton

Hamilton spent 12 big league seasons as a reliable big-league reliever, finishing his career with a 3.05 ERA and making appearances in both the 1963 and '64 World Series for the Yankees. He also spent two seasons as a power forward for the Minneapolis Lakers from 1958-60.

Yankee fans will remember on June 24, 1970 two of Yankee Steve Hamilton's "Folly Floater" pitches retired Cleveland's **Tony Horton**, a very good hitter, at the Bronx in New York to end the top of the 9th. That earned him a place in baseball history. The Yankees trailed the Indians badly and had no chance of beating starter **Sam McDowell**, who had his best stuff that day. Yankee starter **Mel Stottlemyre** did not. Nonetheless, the Crowd went crazy when the first pitch floated down over home plate and Horton fouled it off. Horton called for Steve to throw him another and the lefthander obliged. Tony fouled out to the catcher, **Thurman Munson**. The crowd roared and Steve raised his arms in triumph as he walked to the dugout.

Hamilton pitched with a huge chaw of tobacco. On one occasion he swallowed said chaw, calmly turned on the mound away from home plate, threw up, turned back to home and pitched.

Mark Hendrickson

A natural fit for the court at 6-foot-9, Hendrickson played in 114 games for the 76ers, Kings, Nets and Cavaliers from 1996-2000. The lanky lefty eventually turned his attention to baseball, finding more prolonged success as a reliever for five clubs over 10 Major League seasons.

Cotton Nash

Nash was a first-team All-American for the University of Kentucky before suiting up for the Lakers and San Francisco Warriors during the 1964-65 season. He found himself in the Majors two years later, eventually playing 13 games as a first baseman and left fielder for the White Sox and Twins.

Ron Reed

Reed is the most accomplished baseball player on this crossover list, earning an All-Star nod in 1968 and lasting 19 seasons in the Majors. The righty finished his pitching career with a 146-140 record and 3.46 ERA. Reed also played forward for the Pistons from 1965-67, the same time he was breaking into the big leagues.

Hall of Famer **Dave Winfield** was famously drafted by both the Atlanta Hawks and the ABA's Utah Stars, but did not suit up for either team.

Hall of Famer **Tony Gwynn** was drafted by the San Diego Clippers and the Padres on the very same day: June 10, 1981.

Tom Glavine was an outstanding high school hockey player from Billerica, Mass. He was drafted by the L.A. Kings but decided to play baseball. It worked out.

Nyjer Morgan: While Nyjer Morgan is now known for his past six Major League seasons with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Washington Nationals and Milwaukee Brewers, he played minor league hockey for the Regina Pats of the Western Hockey League in 1999-2000 and ended up scoring two goals in his first game with the Pats.

Chris Drury: While Drury made a career centered on hockey, becoming a Stanley Cup winner with the Colorado Avalanche and the captain of both the Buffalo Sabres and the New York Rangers, this Connecticut native's first love was baseball. In fact, in 1989, at only seven years old, Drury threw a complete-game five-hitter to lead his town, Trumbull, to the Little League World Series title. Two months after this game, Drury threw out the ceremonial first pitch in the second game of the 1989 World Series.

Justin Morneau: Like many Canadians growing up in the 1980s, Morneau was raised idolizing Patrick Roy and dreaming of becoming a hockey goalie. In fact, it's the reason he wears the number 33. Despite finding success as a goaltender, Morneau only played in a single exhibition game, playing for the Portland Winter Hawks of the WHL in 1997. He states that he realized, "[he] was just better at baseball," and so jumped at the opportunity to join the Minnesota Twins when they selected him in the third round of the 1999 draft. In 2006, Morneau became only the third Canadian to ever win the MLB MVP Award.

James Riley: Riley is the first player to ever play both professional baseball and professional hockey. A native of New Brunswick, Canada, Riley began his career in hockey, playing 17 games in the NHL, 90 games in the Pacific Coast Hockey Association and won the Stanley Cup with the Seattle Metropolitans in 1917. In addition, Riley played professional baseball for twelve seasons, from 1921 to 1932, with the St. Louis Browns and Washington Senators.

One would also be remiss without mentioning the three Hall of Fame baseball players -- **Lou Brock, Bob Gibson and Fergie Jenkins** -- who once played for the world-famous Harlem Globetrotters.

MORE LOOKS AT RULE CHANGES

MLB makes extra-inning ghost-runner rule permanent, per sources: How has it changed the game?

Eno Sarris, The Athletic

Major League Baseball's Joint Competition Committee voted to make the rule automatically placing a runner at second base at the start of every extra inning in regular-season games permanent Monday, MLB sources confirmed to *The Athletic*. ESPN first reported the news. Here's what you need to know:

- The competition committee also voted to further limit the use of position players as pitchers to only extra innings, or by a leading team when it is up by 10 or more runs in the ninth inning, or by a trailing team any time it is down by eight or more runs, the sources confirmed. Teams could previously use position players as pitchers when they were leading or trailing by six runs.
- The extra-inning "ghost-runner" rule was first implemented during the 2020 COVID-19-impacted season and continued through last season as the lockout-shortened spring training created additional risk for potential injuries.
- MLB is also implementing a number of other rule changes for 2023: the use of a pitch clock, eliminating the shift, using larger bases and limiting the number of times a pitcher can step off the rubber per at-bat.

The Athletic's instant analysis:

How has the ghost-runner impacted play?

Starting extra innings with a runner on second has had large ramifications to date. In 2019, baseball saw 37 games go 13 innings or longer, with eight over 15 innings. Last year, there were only 11 games that lasted 13 innings or longer, and none over 15. The idea behind reducing marathon games might be that, with pitching staffs built with more and more one-inning pitchers over time, and injuries continuing to stay prevalent, putting pressure on the game to end quicker could be good for arms on every team.

Certainly, everyone working at the game appreciates avoiding 20-inning marathons. But those attending the game might disagree, and cite the fact that, with this rule in place, extra-inning runs have scored at over two times the rate they score in the first nine innings. That's fundamentally different baseball! Their retort might ask baseball teams to build their rosters with more pitchers capable of going longer in emergency situations. — *Sarris*

Why limit position players pitching?

Five years ago, there were 78 pitches thrown under 60 miles per hour during the regular season across all of baseball. Last year, that number soared to 856 as teams increasingly turned to position players to soak up innings. Baseball chose to limit that ability in a rule that might seem complicated but really just boils down to the fact that the rules now limit something that was once unique and has become commonplace and less interesting.

The funny thing is that these new rules wouldn't have changed anything about what might have been the high water mark for position players pitching: catcher Luis Torrens became the first

Mariner position player in franchise history to get the win on the mound as he pitched the tenth for a playoff-bound squad that wanted to rest its arms in the first game of an October doubleheader last season. — *Sarris*

Another newsletter commented that the ghost runner **achieved its goal of limiting super-long games.** Last season saw just 11 games go 13 or more innings, none of those going more than 15. In 2019, 37 went 13 or more innings, eight of those going over 15 frames. Shorter games mean more interest, and more rest for pitching staffs unequipped for 17-inning marathons that end with a shortstop serving 78-mph meatballs over the heart of the plate.



JAYSON STARK

As for the rules changes rolling out in spring training:

Even the people in baseball who have pushed hardest for these rule changes understand. This won't be easy. And this won't always be picturesque.

A lifetime of player routines and thought processes can't possibly be reconfigured in a day, a week or a Zoom call. There are going to be violations of every one of these rules, in every imaginable way. Since pitch-clock violations are going to result in "automatic" balls and strikes, things are going to get wacky.

There will be strikeouts without anybody swinging-and-missing. There will be walks without anybody throwing a pitch.

There will be balks. There will be screaming. There will be stuff unfolding on big-league baseball fields that has never unfolded before.

Some of it will be highly entertaining. Some of it will feel highly outrageous.

There is no more powerful value than shock value. How many times would *you* want to have an automatic strike called on you because you were hitting and didn't get back into the batter's box on time? How fast would you get your act together if that happened with two strikes and you got called out with the bases loaded?

That's exactly how this process went in the minor leagues, you know. The pitch clock was dropped into the lives of minor leaguers during the season last April. For the next month, that went about how you'd expect.

Two weeks in, there were still nearly two pitch-clock violations being called per game. By week four, that was down to just over one a game. By week six, that rate had settled in at about one violation every two games. If the definition of "normal" is the point at which baseball clock violations were pretty much the same as NFL delay-of-game violations (0.6 per game), then the minor leagues took about a month and a half to reach that point.

Pitchers are allowed just two "disengagements" per batter before it is a balk. After two "disengagements," a pitcher can no longer throw over to first base — or any base — unless he then picks off the runner. If the runner isn't out, it's a balk. And that is going to dramatically alter pitching, base-stealing and the art of controlling the running game.

So that's a fun game you and your friends can play if you're hanging out at any spring training games. Start a pool on how many times your favorite pitcher steps off and then shakes his head *because he just frigging forgot ... again*. Sounds like an enjoyable beverage-consuming game to me.

On the batter side—the ticking pitch clock. You would think that 15 seconds between pitches with no one on base is plenty of time for any hitter. You would think that 20 seconds between pitches with runners on would be a piece of cake. But wait. You clearly haven't read the fine print.

You see, this rule also says that the hitter must be in the box *"and alert to the pitcher"* with eight seconds left on that timer. In other words, with nobody on, the hitter needs to be locked in on the pitcher only seven seconds after the clock starts. You should know that quite a few teams are genuinely concerned their hitters are going to have issues with that.

Aren't you worried about all the batting gloves that might not get adjusted now *between every single pitch*? Have you reflected much on all the time hitters have been allowed to spend thinking — *between every single pitch* — about the data they've been fed about what a particular pitcher likes to throw in this count or that count, in this situation or that situation?

There isn't going to be time for that anymore. And a lot of these hitters just aren't ready to live in that world. So violations will be flagged. Strikes will be called. Tempers will erupt. And that will be quite a sight this spring.

So now that we have you primed on the pitch clock and disengagement rules, here's an especially interesting situation to focus on this spring:

Runners on first and third ... man on first takes a big lead ... so the pitcher throws over once ... then the pitcher can't help but throw over twice ... and then ...

Uh-oh. That's two "disengagements." So then what? Is the track meet on?

Suppose the runner on first then takes a gigantic lead? Does the pitcher take that bait, throw over to first and let a run score while a little league base-running adventure fires up? Does the pitcher get all shook up and balk home that runner on third?

MLB has told teams it will consider arguing about pitch-clock calls to be equivalent to arguing balls and strikes. And the penalty for that has always been an automatic ejection. So that should be fun.

And another thing. You can wave so long to the four-man outfield. That's now officially against the new shift rules. But what about the two-man outfield — featuring a center fielder and a right fielder, as usual, but with a left fielder set up in short right field, where shifting infielders used to hang out?

If you guessed *that's still legal*, you win. But will teams dare to try it this spring? I'd bet yes on that.

Have you read the new shift rule closely? If you have, you need a hobby. But either way, it's notable the language dictates that two infielders must be set up on the infield dirt (or shallower) "when the pitch is released."

So now imagine, as the pitcher lurches into his delivery, the shortstop starts sprinting toward the second-base bag and crosses the bag a millisecond after the pitch is delivered, so he's on the "wrong" side of second base when the hitter swings. Is that legal?

Good question. In fact, it's such a good question that several teams have confirmed they asked it to MLB this winter. But the answer is: No! Not legal! It's considered a "circumvention" of the shift rule. So that will not be a spring phenomenon waiting to happen.

OK, now there's more. Remember that many players will leave these spring training camps for the World Baseball Classic — where none of the new rules will be used. So those players will miss out on weeks of new-rules indoctrination and habit-breaking.

And finally, there's this part. It's one thing to have the winning run score in the ninth inning of a spring training game because an umpire called a pitch-clock violation. It's a very different thing to have the winning run score *in a regular-season game* for that same reason.

What are the odds of that happening in April? I'll set them at approximately 9,000 percent, give or take a thousand. But just keep one thing in mind:

Someday, all this hubbub will pass. Someday, everyone will settle into these rules and we'll wake up and find MLB has sliced 20 minutes off the length of the average game. And when that day comes, we'll have to remind ourselves: Baseball never could have gotten there ... without the s— shows of March.



TRIBUTES TO TIM MCCARVER

insight and perspective and curiosity and storytelling talents and a generosity of spirit.

Tom Verducci, Sports Illustrated

in the summer of 1959, a writer from Memphis, David Bloom, visited Rochester, N.Y., and the Triple-A Red Wings to check in on 17-year-old catcher Tim McCarver, who had graduated only two months earlier from Memphis's Christian Brothers Academy.

"As for McCarver, he's on a perpetual picnic," Bloom wrote. "Happiest guy around, full of fun, in the midst of everything the Red Wings do."

The picnic never ended, at least not until he took his last breath. Tim McCarver died Thursday in his beloved Memphis at the age of 81. A man of immense interests, McCarver enjoyed them with gusto. He wrote five books, read poetry, studied and enjoyed fine wine, recorded an album of American standards, hosted a TV sports interview show, won three sports Emmys, appeared in movies and visited art museums wherever his travels took him.

That's how Tom Verducci begins his fitting tribute to the great Tim McCarver, who died yesterday. I cannot recommend it enough.

Until McCarver came along, no one had ever done more than 10 World Series as an analyst, due partly to a rotation of networks covering the series, the star power of play-by-play callers and guest "name" analysts. McCarver elevated the position by merit. He covered 24 World Series across three networks (ABC, CBS and Fox) and with four play-by-play broadcasters (Al Michaels, Jack Buck, Sean McDonough and Joe Buck).

His Memphis drawl, interest in humanities, cornball humor ("That was a Linda Ronstadt fastball: blew-by-you") and critical eye—his father was a Memphis police lieutenant and his pitching mentors and good friends were the uncompromising **Bob Gibson and Steve Carlton**—made him the quintessential baseball analyst. He didn't talk too much. He let the game breathe, interjecting only when he had something salient to say, which is the essence of making one's words even more impactful.

Ken Rosenfeld

During our time together at Fox, from 2006 to '13, he not only accepted me, a print reporter becoming a third voice on the broadcast, but also taught me so much. I tried to tell Tim at the end of every season how much of an honor it was to work with him. I told him that in later years as well. I only wish I could tell him once more, thank him for everything again.

I've written twice previously about Tim, when he won the 2012 Ford C. Frick Award to enter the broadcasters' section of the Hall of Fame, and again when he left Fox after the 2013 World Series. Both stories appeared on Fox Sports' website and no longer are available online, but I'm adapting sections from each for this memorial tribute, wanting to best capture what I felt about Tim at the time.

Tim's enthusiasm for the game never wavered. He worked to prepare for each broadcast, harder than most viewers imagined. On the morning of a game, Tim would call our producer, Pete Macheska, to discuss ideas; Tim valued the opinion of others in helping form his own. He then would arrive at the park at least five hours before first pitch, well ahead of Joe Buck, his play-by-partner for 18 years at Fox, and myself.

Tim would talk with editorial assistants Wayne Fidelman and Dave Korus, seeking nuggets of information, scrawling tiny notes on the big board that he used during the broadcast. He would look at tapes, graphics, packages, consider what he would say in the opening segment of the show. By the first pitch Tim was like a thoroughbred at the gate, ready to go.

In addition to spending hours studying both clubs, Tim also would talk with players, coaches and managers, both in the clubhouse and on the field. His curiosity was boundless. He frequently would remark to someone in uniform, "I have never heard that term before." And then he would use that term on the broadcast, drawing sheer delight out of what he had learned.

His knowledge of the game was encyclopedic. And his memory was phenomenal. Decades later, Tim could recall sequences from when he was catching Bob Gibson in the 1960s and Steve Carlton in the '70s — and a whole lot more.

As Ed Goren, the former vice-chairman of the Fox Sports Media Group, liked to say, Tim also was the master of the "first guess," giving the proper opinion on strategy before plays occurred, rather than waiting until after. Some fans complained about him — some fans always complain about broadcasters — but Tim worked postseason baseball on network television for 29 consecutive years, including 24 World Series. Both are records for an analyst. Evidently, he was doing something right.

Tim made his major-league debut at age 17 in 1959. He played 21 years, his career spanning four decades, and appeared in three World Series. After retiring, he transformed himself not simply into a former player turned analyst, but also a broadcaster skilled enough to co-host primetime coverage of the 1992 Winter Olympics.

Richard Deitsch

His baseball life was astounding. Tim McCarver played in four different decades (1959-80) in the major leagues as a heady and strong-hitting catcher and found a second American act as one of the most influential baseball broadcasters. He called 29 consecutive MLB postseasons on network television from 1984 to 2013, and his 24 years as a World Series television analyst is a

mark unlikely to be topped. He teamed with Joe Buck for 18 years as the Fox network's lead national baseball broadcast team after previously working with Joe's father, Hall of Famer Jack Buck, for two World Series on CBS. Even his critics — and he had many of them for his tendency to over-talk in a broadcast — would concede few were better at first-guessing as a baseball analyst.



Bob Gibson, McCarver and Mike Shannon celebrate the final out of the 1967 World Series.

Joe Posnanski

Tim McCarver at age 25 had an absolutely fantastic season. This was 1967. He hit .295/.369/.452, with 26 doubles, 14 homers, he struck out just 32 times and he played fantastic defense behind the plate, throwing out 55% of the baserunners who tried to steal off his pitchers and brilliantly handling a pitching staff with titans Bob Gibson and Steve Carlton and a 29-year-old rookie named **Dick Hughes**.

“Oh,” Gibson would remember “he could call a game.”

The Cardinals won the World Series. McCarver finished second in the MVP voting. He looked at that moment to be one of the bright stars in baseball and perhaps even a baseball legend.

“The kid,” four-time World Series champion **Wally Schang** said, “reminds me of **Mickey Cochrane**.”

As a player, alas, it wasn’t meant to be. That was his last great season. McCarver kicked around the big leagues for another 13 seasons — well, parts of 13 seasons —and he had his good moments, particularly as Gibson’s and Carlton’s personal catcher, but he settled in as a backup and a good teammate.

And *then* he became a baseball legend.

When I heard on Thursday that McCarver had died, I reached out to some friends to ask what he meant to them. For people my age, Vin Scully was the poet, Jack Buck and Harry Caray were the heart, Bob Costas was the history, Joe Garagiola and **Bob Uecker** were the laughter, **Tony Kubek** was the friend.

And McCarver was the teacher.

“I learned 33.3% of my baseball from him,” my friend Mike Vaccaro texted me. “I learned 33.3% from **Buck Showalter** his first year as the Yankees manager. And I learned 33.3% from my father.”

Funny thing, McCarver came up at a time when Howard Cosell was furiously railing against what he called the jockocracy — the hiring of former players instead of journalists as announcers.

“I have kids all over the country writing me hundreds — maybe thousands — of letters a year,” he said. “‘How can I get into your field?’ they ask. What do I tell them? Become a guttural illiterate and throw a football or throw a baseball? That’s what it’s come down to.”

Cosell was rude and self-serving, but that doesn't mean he was entirely wrong. The exclusive hiring of former players to be in booths across all sports for approaching a half-century has peppered our games with a lot of cliches, a lot of one-note analysis, a lot of low-energy reliance on "when I was playing" stories, and a lot of *sameness*.

I think it comes down to this: Everybody hires former players — the more famous the better — in the hope that they can take us fans *inside* the game. And while there will be some exceptions, the results usually will be disappointing because it takes so much more than big-game experience to bring people inside.

What does it take? Right: It takes insight and perspective and curiosity and storytelling talents and a generosity of spirit. There have been many, many Tim McCarver wannabes. But there was only one Tim McCarver for those reasons.

He was funny, too — I loved his story about going to the mound to talk to Bob Gibson ("He said to me, 'get back behind the plate, the only thing you know about pitching is you can't hit it") and his insightful line "speed, ironically, slows down the game," and how he would call **Dwight Gooden's** fastball "Lord Charles," because it was too regal to be called "Uncle Charlie," like other curveballs.

"Have you ever watched his call of the Luis Gonzalez at-bat?" a friend asked me. I had not. I was at that game — Game 7 of the 2001 World Series — and while I certainly have seen the highlight of Luis Gonzalez against Mariano Rivera before, I had never before listened to Tim McCarver's call.

Here's what he said while Gonzalez dug into the box and Rivera took the ball and readied for the next pitch. Just as a reminder: The bases were loaded. There was one out. The score was tied 2-2.

Take it, Timmy:

"The one problem is Rivera throws inside to lefthanders, so lefthanders get a lot of broken bat hits into shallow outfield ... the shallow part of the outfield. That's the danger of bringing the infield in with a guy like Rivera on the mound."

On the next pitch, Luis Gonzalez hit a broken bat single over the drawn-in infield. The ball landed in the shallow outfield.

Incredible. That might have been the greatest broadcasting prophecy in any sport.

And, funny, you never really hear people talk about it. Tony Romo predicts a screen play correctly and people are ready to give him the Nobel Prize. McCarver perfectly called one of the most iconic hits in baseball history before it happened and ... nothing.

I suppose that's because McCarver was just around for so long. The color commentator game is not built to last; eventually, even the best of the best like McCarver start to repeat themselves, lose touch with the younger players, stubbornly cling to the way things used to be. By the end, sure, McCarver could be a hard listen.

Then again, by the end, so could the Rolling Stones.

I like what Gary Cohen says about McCarver: "He simply revolutionized what it meant to be a color analyst on a major league sports broadcast, really baseball or any other sport. ... He was able to see things, he was a great observer, and he was able to relate those things to non-baseball people in a way that allowed us to better enjoy the games."

Yes. I want to go back to three words I used earlier: "Generosity of spirit." Of course, Tim McCarver loved baseball. That's a given and it's true for many, many athletes.

But what isn't nearly as common is this: He deeply wanted to share that love of baseball with us. He wanted to unwrap the game for us, explain to us the relationship between the pitcher and catcher, describe to us the back-and-forth mind games and reveal to us the complexities that we were not seeing. He didn't want there to be any secrets. He wanted everyone to be able to see the full-color beauty of baseball.

Mlb.com

Tim McCarver, who made his Major League debut with the Cardinals in 1959, spent seven decades in professional baseball. That included a 21-year Major League playing career before

transitioning into an award-winning broadcaster, whom many considered to be baseball's version of football's John Madden. McCarver had a way of simplifying the game of baseball for the average fan; his use of the English language was impeccable, punctuated by a touch of friendly Memphis drawl.

McCarver was awarded the Hall of Fame's Ford C. Frick Award in 2012 for his Emmy-winning work in the booth. In 2016, he was inducted into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame.

McCarver worked as an analyst and play-by-play voice for the Phillies, Mets, Yankees, Cardinals and Giants from 1980-2019. It was his work as a broadcaster with the Mets that gained McCarver fame and earned him an opportunity to become an analyst for ABC, CBS and FOX, which lasted a combined 28 years, calling a record 24 World Series and 20 All-Star Games. McCarver worked his first World Series game in 1985 as a late replacement for Howard Cosell, and he set a record in 2003 by broadcasting his 13th Fall Classic on national TV, surpassing Curt Gowdy.

James Timothy McCarver was born in Memphis on Oct. 16, 1941. Like many analysts in baseball, he preceded his time behind the microphone with years behind the plate. He spent 21 years as a Major League catcher for several teams, including the Cardinals, Phillies, Expos and Red Sox. His best years were with the Cardinals, with whom he won World Series titles in 1964 and '67. In the '64 Series against the Yankees, McCarver shined at the plate, going 11-for-23 with five RBIs and a home run that broke a tied score in the 10th inning of Game 5. He even stole home in Game 7. He won another Series ring in '67, the year he earned his second All-Star selection and finished second in National League MVP voting, and he went 9-for-27 with a homer and four RBIs in the Cards' seven-game World Series loss to Detroit in '68.

McCarver retired from playing after the 1979 season and moved into Philadelphia's broadcast booth, where he quickly prospered, though he ended up returning to the playing field for six games for the World Series-champion Phillies in late 1980, making him one of the few players to play in the Majors in four decades.

After leaving the Phillies' booth, McCarver was a staple on Mets broadcasts from 1983-98, working with **Ralph Kiner and Fran Healy**. He moved to the Yankees from 1999-2001, working with **Bobby Murcer**, and then the Giants in 2002. He is one of three sportscasters to have covered the Mets and the Yankees, along with Healy and **Tom Seaver**.

"Tim McCarver simply revolutionized what it meant to be a color analyst on a Major League sports broadcast," current Mets broadcaster Gary Cohen said in a video SNY posted on Twitter. "Some people laid the groundwork earlier like **Tony Kubek**, but nobody brought the insight and honesty and the granular nature of the game, and nobody did it with more enthusiasm than Timmy did. He was a great player in his own right -- having played in four decades -- but he was able to see things. He was a great observer and he was able to relate those things to non-baseball people in a way that allowed us to better enjoy the games that we already love."

McCarver by the Numbers

1909 games

6206 plate appearances

590 runs scored

1501 hits

252 doubles

57 triples

97 HRs

645 RBI

61 SB/49 CS

422 K/548 BB

.271 batting average

.337 on base %

.388 Slugging



THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE ANSWERS

Arizona State has produced more No. 1 overall picks (four) than any other school, starting with Rick Monday in the very first Draft in 1965. Which of these Sun Devils stars was *not* the top selection in his Draft?

- A. Floyd Bannister
- B. Bob Horner
- C. Reggie Jackson
- D. Spencer Torkelson

C. Reggie Jackson.

The lone Sun Devil enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame, Jackson went No. 2 overall to the Athletics in 1966 after the Mets chose California high school catcher Steve Chilcott, who never reached the big leagues. In case you were wondering about Barry Bonds, he was the No. 6 overall pick in the 1985 Draft -- [the deepest Draft ever](#).

Mudcat Grant won 21 games for the 1965 Twins and said he had joined the “Black Aces”. 14 other black pitchers had one or more 20 game win seasons. How many can you name?

Don Newcomb	20-9	1951	Dodgers
	20-5	1955	Dodgers
	27-7	1956	Dodgers
Sam Jones	21-15	1959	Giants
Bob Gibson	20-12	1965	Cards
	21-12	1966	Cards
	22-8	1968	Cards
	20-13	1969	Cards
	23-7	1970	Cards
Mudcat Grant	21-7	1965	Twins
Fergie Jenkins	20-13	1967	Cubs
	20-15	1968	Cubs
	21-15	1969	Cubs
	22-16	1970	Cubs
	24-13	1971	Cubs
	20-12	1972	Cubs
	25-12	1974	Rangers
Earl Wilson	22-11	1967	Tigers

Vida Blue	24-8	1971	A's
	20-9	1973	A's
	22-11	1975	A's
J.R. Richard	20-15	1971	Astros
Al Downing	20-9	1971	Yankees
Mike Norris	22-9	1980	A's
Dwight Gooden	24-4	1985	Mets
Dave Stewart	20-13	1987	A's
	21-12	1988	A's
	21-9	1989	A's
	22-11	1990	A's
Dontrelle Willis	22-10	2005	Marlins
CC Sabathia	21-7	2010	Yankees
David Price	20-5	2012	Rays

Mike Trout ranks fourth among active players with 350 home runs. Who are the three players ahead of him?

Miguel Cabrera (507), **Nelson Cruz** (459), **Giancarlo Stanton** (378)

Since 2017, only one batter in baseball has had multiple seasons with at least 120 RBIs. Name this 28 year old right handed National League slugger.

Pete Alonso. He had exactly 120 RBIs in his fantastic first season, when he banded a rookie-record 53 home runs. And last year, he tied **Aaron Judge** for baseball's top spot, with 131 RBIs.

You might have guessed one of the 12 players who drove in 120 once since 2017:

Aaron Judge, Paul Goldschmidt, Nolan Arenado, Freddie Freeman, José Abreu, Khris Davis, J.D. Martinez, Marcell Ozuna, Salvador Perez, José Ramirez, Anthony Rendon, Giancarlo Stanton.

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