

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

5.21.2023

Good morning baseball fans,

Mets roster construction, robo umps, dead singers at Yankee Stadium, the re-birth of Hinchliffe Stadium plus the regular weird and interesting stuff.

Enjoy.

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Winners of multiple World Series since 2000—who did they beat?

Red Sox

2004, 4 games to 0, Manny Ramirez MVP

2007, 4 games to 0, Mike Lowell MVP

2013, 4 games to 2, David Ortiz MVP

2018, 4 games to 1, Steve Pearce MVP

San Francisco Giants

2010, 4 games to 1, Edgar Renteria MVP

2012, 4 games to 0, Pablo Sandoval MVP

2014, 4 games to 3, Madison Bumgarner MVP

New York Yankees

2000, 4 games to 1, Derek Jeter MVP

2009, 4 games to 2, Hideki Matsui MVP

St. Louis Cardinals

2006, 4 games to 1, David Eckstein MVP

2011, 4 games to 3, David Freese MVP

Houston Astros

2017, 4 games to 3, George Springer MVP

2022, 4 games to 2, Jeremy Peña MVP

Lefty slugger who was AL MVP in 1973

I hit 563 HRs for 4 teams, all in the AL, led the league 4 times

I led the majors in strikeouts 3 times and the AL another 2. My 2597 career whiffs is a record.

I was MVP of the 1973 and 1977 World Series.

Who am I?

Since 2000 six teams won their only World Series appearance. Name them.

2022, 4 games to 2 NL

2019, 4 games to 3 NL

2016, 4 games to 3 NL

2005, 4 games to 0 AL

2003, 4 games to 2 NL

2002, 4 games to 3 AL

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Seattle catcher **Cal Raleigh**'s best trait is power. He hit 27 homers last year, despite hitting just .211 and clocking a pedestrian .774 OPS. Those numbers are slightly up this year (.228 and .775), but last night, he looked like the best offensive catcher in baseball.

Raleigh went 3-for-5 with two home runs Monday night— one from each side of the plate in Boston. He is the first catcher in the history of Fenway Park to homer from both sides in a

game. Even better: Raleigh grew up a Red Sox fan and idolized **Jason Varitek**, another switch-hitting catcher.

Through Friday, of 437 timer violations, 287 were called on pitchers (65.7%), 126 on batters (28.8%), and 5 on catchers (1.1%).

Shohei Ohtani became the first starting pitcher since 1964 to reach base five times in a game as the Los Angeles Angels beat the Baltimore Orioles, 9-5 on Monday.

A quarter of the way through Major League Baseball's first season with the pitch timer, relief pitchers seem to be bearing the most stress from it, with save conversions dropping to 61.4% from 67.8% at a similar point last season.

The save percentage is near the bottom range of the past decade, which averaged 65.1%, MLB said Monday. The high was 70% in 2015 and the low 61% in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season. The question is—are relievers who were accustomed to plenty of time to recover from one all-out pitch and then throw another less effective with less time to recover?

Former Red Sox starters **Nate Eovaldi** (Rangers), **Rich Hill** (Pirates), and **Michael Wacha** (Padres) are a combined 13-6 with a 3.49 ERA over 26 starts with their new teams. Meanwhile, the Red Sox rotation went into the weekend 16-17, 5.27. The Sox already have used eight starters.

Through Friday, the Blue Jays and White Sox were the only teams to have used five starting pitchers all season. The Rays (11) and Marlins (10) had the most

Great trivia from a subscriber. Can you name the three dead men whose voices fans hear sing at every Yankees game?

Robert Merrill – national anthem and sometimes God bless America in 7th inning stretch

Frank Sinatra singing New York, new York after a win

The third is Harry Belafonte. "Day-yo!" to amp up the crowd.

Baseball has a new flame-throwing starting pitcher — and he just turned 20.

Eury Pérez, the Marlins' top prospect and the No. 1 pitching prospect in all of baseball, debuted Friday night. Although he gave up a pair of runs over 4 2/3 innings, his stuff very much lived up to the hype. Eno Sarris broke down some highlights in The Athletic:

- His fastball sat at 97.5 mph, a feat only topped among starting pitchers by **Jacob deGrom, Hunter Greene, Mason Miller and teammate Sandy Alcantara**.
- He spun it at 2623 RPM, which only **Emmanuel Clase** (minimum 250 pitches) has topped this year.
- His slider was clocked at 87.2 mph on average — that's a top-25 number among starters.
- He's got a power change, a 91.2 mph pitch that was faster than all but four starters in baseball this year.
- He got 16 whiffs in this game — which put him immediately into the top 10 percent among starts this year.



That's A's owner John Fisher, team president Dave Kaval and MLB commissioner Rob Manfred as the target of a tomato toss outside the Oakland Coliseum. You have to admire the creativity in these dark times.

Mariners **Bryce Miller** (2-0) allowed just three hits, two in the first inning, and struck out three while walking none. In three starts, Miller has given up just one run on seven hits while walking one and striking out 18 in 19 innings.

Miller is the second Seattle pitcher with a sub-1.00 ERA (0.47) through his first three career starts. **Félix Hernández** (0.86) in 2005 is the other.

In each of his first three starts, he's gone at least six innings, while allowing:

- One run or less
- Three hits or fewer
- One walk or fewer

Miller, the Mariners' No. 2 prospect, has started his career in a way no other starter has since at least 1901. In 19 innings through three starts, Miller has an 0.47 ERA and an 0.42 WHIP. Opponents are batting .111 against him, and he has picked up 18 strikeouts while allowing only one walk.

Yankee rookie shortstop **Anthony Volpe** reached on a bunt single to the left side off Ray's pitcher **Ryan Thompson** (1-1) starting the sixth, stole second and third, then sped home on the next pitch when Thompson's slider was way outside and eluded catcher **Francisco Mejía**. Volpe started the season 13 for 13 in steal attempts, one more than **Joe DiMaggio** from the start of his career until he was caught at home by Boston on Sept. 25, 1939, as part of a double-steal attempt with **Lou Gehrig**.

Ceddanne Rafaela may have just swiped another bag for the Portland (Maine) Sea Dogs.

The second-ranked Red Sox prospect set a franchise record with six stolen bases for Double-A Portland in a 6-2 loss to Somerset at Hadlock Field on Saturday. The club set a team-high mark with nine total swipes on the day. The previous record was six, set 11 years ago.

Rafaela was originally credited with seven stolen bases, but his final steal of third base in the ninth inning was changed by the official scorer after the game to defensive indifference. Still, the infielder with 60-grade speed tied a mark only held by four players in AL/NL history and was only matched once in the 21st century. **Carl Crawford** stole six bases for the Rays in a game against the Red Sox on May 5, 2009, and before that **Eric Young Jr.** did it for Colorado in 1996, **Otis Nixon** for Atlanta in 1991 and **Eddie Collins** did it twice for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1912.

Rafaela stole 28 bases last season over 116 games with High-A Greenville and Portland. He's at 16 now through 27 games. Rafaela's six stolen bases put him just one shy of a mark that an 18-year-old **Ricky Henderson** once achieved in the Minor Leagues in 1977.

With his strikeouts of Brewers rookies **Brice Turang** and **Joey Wiemer** in the bottom of the fifth inning in the Royals' eventual 4-3 walk-off loss at American Family Field, **Zack Greinke** has now struck out 1,000 different batters in his career.

Only four pitchers in AL/NL history had ever done that entering Saturday night: Hall of Famers **Nolan Ryan, Randy Johnson and Greg Maddux**, as well as seven-time Cy Young Award winner **Roger Clemens**.

Greinke has racked up many milestones in his career, including surpassing 500 career starts and 50,000 career pitches thrown last season. He entered Saturday just two new victims shy of striking out 1,000 different batters in his career. There were four Brewers in the lineup he had never struck out: Turang, Wiemer, **Owen Miller and William Contreras**.

Greinke allowed two runs in five innings Saturday, walking none and striking out five. He fanned **Christian Yelich, Jesse Winker and Rowdy Tellez**, all batters he's already struck out.

Then Greinke led off the fifth by striking out Turang looking at an 89.9 mph fastball on the outer part of the plate. With two outs, Wiemer battled Greinke in a longer at-bat, but on the seventh pitch, Greinke threw an 89.5 mph elevated fastball. Perez pulled it down enough to convince home plate umpire **Tripp Gibson** of a strike.

Through their first 40 games, the Rangers outscored their opponents, 254-157, while going 25-15.

Prior to 2023, only 13 teams dating back to 1901 posted a run differential of +97 or better through 40 games, per Stathead. Among those teams, 11 made the postseason, and nine went on to win the World Series.

It's been more than 100 years since the last time a team (Cleveland in 1921) missed the playoffs after recording a run differential at least that high through 40 games.

The fact that the Rangers have done this after going 68-94 (.420 winning percentage) a year ago makes it all the more amazing. Of the 13 teams that started off a season with a run differential of +97 or better through 40 games from 1901-2022, none had a lower winning percentage than .568 the previous season.

Texas is averaging 6.23 runs per game, the most in MLB.

On May 5 the Padres beat the Dodgers and posted a memo on their scoreboard of **Clayton Kershaw** crying. From their Dodgers went 7-1 including a sweep of San Diego last weekend, Padres 1-7.

Ken Rosenthal writing in The Athletic:

Consider the rosters. The Dodgers are carefully if not perfectly constructed, a team featuring 10 homegrown players, as well as three others who were part of multiple World Series teams in Los Angeles. There is a shared history among many of the players, a familiarity with one another, a culture of development and winning that eases the transition for newcomers and helps them succeed.

The Padres, on the other hand, are a top-heavy, slapped-together collection of imported stars. None of their three homegrown players — relievers **Steven Wilson** and **Tom Cosgrove** and left-handed starter **Ryan Weathers**, who was recalled to start Sunday — plays an especially major role. Padres players can tell you how things were done in their previous organizations. But other than spending money and making bold trades, two admirable characteristics, to be sure, what exactly is the Padres Way?

Padres \$249 million payroll, the third-highest in the league (the Dodgers are fifth at \$228 million).

until proven otherwise, there is a separator between these teams, one that is not easily defined, but is obvious almost every time they play. Dodgers manager **Dave Roberts** put it simply: “We know how to win.” The Padres have not shown that same consistent knack. Not yet.

St. Louis 3B **Nolan Arenado** was 7 of 14 with three homers and seven RBIs in the Cards sweep of the Red Sox last weekend. Then he kept rolling with 5 game HR streak. Arenado hit his 300th career HR earlier this season. With his first-inning infield single Wednesday night that plated teammate **Paul Goldschmidt** -- giving the Cardinals a lead over Milwaukee-- Arenado recorded his 1,000th career RBI. He is the eighth active MLB player with 1,000 career RBIs, joining Goldschmidt on that list.

He is one of 143 players in NL/AL history with at least 300 home runs and 1,000 RBIs. He is one of just six active players with that distinction, joining **Miguel Cabrera**, **Nelson Cruz**, **Joey Votto**, **Evan Longoria** and Goldschmidt.

The all-time RBI leader among AL/NL third basemen is **Adrián Beltré** (1,707 RBIs)

Three players in Cardinals history -- **Mark McGwire** [1998], **Matt Carpenter** [2018] and Goldschmidt [2019] -- have homered in six straight games.

Ken Griffey Jr. [1993], **Don Mattingly** [1987] and **Dale Long** [1956] are the only players in NL/AL history to homer in eight straight games. Six players have homered in seven straight, most recently **Mike Trout** from Sept. 4-12, 2022.

Aaron Judge's tiebreaking, two-run homer Tuesday night, a 462-foot drive in the eighth inning off Jay Jackson, broke a large maple leaf attached to the front of the Rogers Centre's restaurant. Judge has five homers in his last four games, raising his season total to 11.

Judge has the fifth-most multi-homer games in Yankees history with 29. He trails **Babe Ruth** (68), **Mickey Mantle** (46), **Lou Gehrig** (43) and **Joe DiMaggio** (35) and is tied with **ARod** at 29.

Third baseman **Rafael Devers** and starter **Chris Sale** are the only members of the 2018 World Series team still with the Red Sox.

Seiya Suzuki became the first Japanese-born player to hit a homer in three straight plate appearances in the Major Leagues. The last Cubs hitter to do so was **Kris Bryant** during a three-homer game against the Nationals on May 17, 2019.

One of the reasons the Cubs signed Suzuki to a five-year, \$85 million contract prior to last season was due to the blend of power and plate discipline displayed with the Hiroshima Toyo Carp. Across the 2016-21 seasons, he averaged one blast per 18.3 plate appearances. That included belting 38 homers in '21.

Going into Wednesday's game, Suzuki had just 17 home runs in 570 plate appearances in the Majors. That equated to one shot every 33.5 PAs since joining the Cubs. Some injury setbacks -- a hand injury in '22 and then an oblique strain in Spring Training this year -- certainly played a role in sapping some of the power.

Suzuki snapped a drought of 110 plate appearances without a home run when he went deep in the seventh inning on Sunday against the Twins. The right fielder has gone 6-for-13 with four homers since ending that power outage.

Yankees pitcher **Domingo Germán** received a 10-game suspension and an undisclosed fine on Wednesday for violating the prohibitions on foreign substances, which resulted in his ejection prior to the bottom of the fourth inning of Tuesday's game against the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre.

Germán insisted that he had used only the rosin bag, which is available at the back of the mound. Crew chief **James Hoye** disputed that in the strongest terms, saying it was “definitely not rosin,” and that “this was sticky, as in my fingers had a hard time coming off his palm.”

Either way, Germán faced an automatic 10-game suspension. The violation was flagged by the same umpiring crew that back in April demanded Germán wash his hands between innings of a game in April.

In MLB history there have been eight 2-HR cycles (last by Arizona's **Greg Colbrunn** in 2002) and four 6-hit cycles (last by Milwaukee's **Christian Yelich** in 2018).

Spencer Strider of the Braves had gone 41 games without giving up more than one HR until Texas got him Wednesday night.

Since 2020 the Mets have had four walk-off homeruns—all by **Pete Alonso**.

Not only would Las Vegas be the smallest TV market in the league, but it's also smaller than any of the other cities that have been rumored to be in the running for expansion (all of which are smaller TV markets than Oakland, by the way).

Speaking of TV...

The first baseball game broadcast on TV (this week in 1939) was actually not an MLB game. The two teams were featured in that historic game were Columbia and Princeton universities. In addition to being the first baseball game shown on television, it was the first televised sporting event of any kind. The game drew an estimated 5,000 people to Columbia's Baker Field in New York City, but only about 400 people were able to watch the game on TV. That's how many television sets were within NBC's broadcast range at the time.

The game was a good one. Princeton won, 2–1, in 10 innings. The broadcast wasn't so great. NBC used a single camera, perched on a platform perpendicular to home plate, which made it nearly impossible for viewers to follow the game.

“It is difficult to see how this sort of thing can catch the public fancy,” read a *New York Times* review published the next day.

The *Times* complained that the single camera was “woefully lacking” and that an effective broadcast really needed three or four cameras. The review also panned the picture quality as being blurry and dark.

The broadcast cost NBC \$3,000 (about \$66,000 today) and was successful enough that the network decided to try airing a big-league game a few months later. On Aug. 26, 1939, NBC used two cameras to bring audiences a Dodgers-Reds game from Brooklyn.

This week marks the 25th anniversary of **David Wells’** perfect game against the Minnesota Twins on May 17, 1998. The Yankees won 4-0.

Bernie Williams went 3-for-3 with two doubles and a solo homer off Minnesota starter **LaTroy Hawkins** that afternoon. Yet Williams' performance was lost to history as Wells tossed the Yanks’ first perfect game since **Don Larsen** in the 1956 World Series.

Think the new rules are breathing some life into the game? You would be right. The rate of base runners per game in 2022 was *the second-lowest in the last 115 years*. 2022, 1968 and 1908. Brutal. 3 and a half hour games with little action—a recipe for death as far as attracting and holding onto a new generation of fans.

So go ahead. Rant about shift limits, larger bases and the relentless pitch-timer countdowns all you want. But, for MLB, to sit back and do nothing was a terrible option. It also was not an option any other pro sport would even have had on its menu. The only choice is to identify the problems, then tweak the rules to try to address those problems.

Saw a graphic saying last rookie to top 100 RBIs was **Aaron Judge** with 114 in 2017, 18th most ever by a rookie. That of course raised the question of who are the rookie season RBI leaders?

Ted Williams	145	1939	Red Sox
Walt Dropo	144	1950	Red Sox
Hal Trosky Sr.	142	1934	Indians
Dale Alexander	137	1929	Tigers

Albert Pujols	130	2001	Cards
Joe DiMaggio	125	1936	Yankees
Buck Freeman	122	1899	Senators
Pete Alonso	120	2019	Mets
Wally Berger	119	1930	Braves
Mark McGwire	118	1987	A's

Odd scheduling quirk-- At no point this season will the Mets have played more home games than road games. Same for the Blue Jays.

Joe Sheehan's newsletter says we should keep an eye on Mariner's pitcher **George Kirby**. Kirby, who last year was a key part of the Mariners' first trip to the playoffs since 2001, has expanded on his extreme control approach in 2023. He's walked four batters in 51 1/3 innings over eight starts.

The Mariners' first-round pick out of Elon College in 2019, Kirby moved quickly, slowed only by the lost 2020 season. He showed excellent control while shooting through the system, walking nobody in short-season ball in his pro debut, and just over 5% of batters at high-A and Double-A. Last year, in 25 starts, he leaned on a 95-mph fastball to run a 3.39 ERA and a 2.99 FIP. In an elimination game against the eventual champion Astros, Kirby threw seven shutout innings without a walk, though the Mariners would eventually lose in 18 innings. Kirby walked 4.1% of the batters he faced with a 133/22 K/BB, incredibly impressive for a rookie.

Command and Control (best K/BB as a rookie starter, min. 100 IP, 1893-2022)

		K	BB	K/BB
Masahiro Tanaka	2014	141	21	6.71
George Kirby	2022	133	22	6.05
Roy Oswalt	2001	144	24	6.00
Noah Syndergaard	2015	166	31	5.35
Matt Shoemaker	2014	124	24	5.17

Many of the best walk rates ever date to the Deadball Era, years like **Christy Mathewson's** 1913-14 peak, or Babe Adams's 1920, when he issued 18 free passes in 263 innings. Just seven

pitchers since 1893, when the pitching rubber was set at 60'6", have ever had a walk rate under 2%.

The Artists (lowest BB%, since 1893)

		BB	BB%
Carlos Silva	2005	9	1.2%
Babe Adams	1920	18	1.7%
Christy Mathewson	1913	21	1.8%
Christy Mathewson	1914	23	1.8%
Phil Hughes	2014	16	1.9%
Bret Saberhagen	1994	13	1.9%
Red Lucas	1933	18	1.996%

Kirby is chasing that kind of history this year, posting a 1.98% figure so far.

I watched a crazy game Thursday night—Cards 16 Dodgers 8. Cards were up 9-2, Dodgers came back to 9-8 before St. Louis pulled away. Riding two-homer games from **Willson Contreras** and **Nolan Gorman**, the Cardinals smashed seven home runs -- their most in a game in St. Louis in 83 years

Freddie Freeman reached the 300-homer milestone in style with a grand slam in the top of the sixth off St. Louis reliever **Génesis Cabrera**. That put Freeman in the 300 HR/1,000 RBI club. Freeman became the 144th player in NL/AL history with at least 300 home runs and 1,000 RBIs. He is one of just seven active players with that distinction, joining **Miguel Cabrera**, **Nelson Cruz**, **Joey Votto**, **Evan Longoria**, **Paul Goldschmidt** and **Nolan Arenado** (who achieved the feat on Wednesday with his 1,000th RBI).

Besides Contreras, the only other Cardinals catcher to hit 2 homers and drive in 6 runs in a game is Hall of Famer **Ted Simmons** (9/25/1980 and 6/11/79)

Freeman also became the fifth player to reach 300 homers in a Dodgers uniform, joining **Duke Snider**, **Gil Hodges**, **Gary Sheffield** and **Adrián González**.

Only one other player hit No. 300 with a grand slam: **Ruben Sierra** in 2004.

Subscriber response to last week's question—who is best pitcher who never won a Cy Young Award?

Clearly the CY Young answer is **Juan Marichal**:

He was 243—142 for his career (.631W%), 2303 Ks and a 1.101 WHIP.

He had one season of 25-8 (.758W%), 248 Ks and 66 BBs, 2.62 FIP and 0.996 WHIP.

Or the year when he was 22-13 with a 2.13 era and 10 SHOs, 240 Ks and 46 BBs, a 2.59 FIP and 0.914 WHIP.

Or maybe the very next year when he was 25-6 (.806W%) and 2.23 ERA, with 222 Ks and 36 BBs in 301 innings (WTF!!!!), with a 2.86 FIP and 0.859 WHIP (that's 1.1 BB/9 and 6.7 H/9!!!!).

Or it could have been two years later when he was 26-9 with a 2.43 era and 30 CP, a 2.36 FIP and 1.047 WHIP.

Or it could even have been the next year after that when he was 21-11 with a 2.10 ERA, 8 SHOs, a 2.39 FIP and 0.994 WHIP.

He got ZERO!!!!!! Cy Young votes during those years and never finished higher than 8th. Insane.

Editors note—Marichal's great seasons were 1963-1969. Timing is everything. National League Cy Young winners those years:

1963 **Sandy Koufax**

1965 **Sandy Koufax**

1966 **Sandy Koufax**

1967 **Mike McCormick** (Marichal's teammate on the Giants)

1968 **Bob Gibson**

1969 **Tom Seaver**

May 15, 1941: Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak began as the 'Yankee Clipper' collected a single off White Sox pitcher Eddie Smith in a 13-1 Yankees loss at Yankee Stadium. DiMaggio won't go hitless again until July 17.

Over the course of a streak that captivated the nation's attention, DiMaggio batted .408 (91-for-223), with 16 doubles, four triples, 15 homers and 55 RBIs.

Pete Alonso hit his league leading 17th HR Friday night at Citi Field. Alonso's grand slam helped the Mets to a 10-9 win over the Guardians. It also tied him with Lucas Duda with 71 homers for the lead at Citi Field. (*As visitor: Giancarlo Stanton (23 HR)*)

Which of course brought up the question—most HRs at a single stadium?

1. **Mel Ott**, Polo Grounds (New York): 323
2. **Sammy Sosa**, Wrigley Field: 293
3. **Ernie Banks**, Wrigley Field: 290
4. **Mickey Mantle**, Yankee Stadium: 266
5. **Mike Schmidt**, Veterans Stadium (Philadelphia): 265
6. **Frank Thomas**, Guaranteed Rate Field: 263
- 7-T. **Paul Konerko**, Guaranteed Rate Field: 259
- 7-T. **Babe Ruth**, Yankee Stadium, 259
9. **Stan Musial**, Busch Stadium, 252
10. **Lou Gehrig**, Yankee Stadium, 251

If you go ball park by ball park, here are some highlights (how many did you guess?):

Fenway Park (Red Sox): Ted Williams (248 HR)
As visitor: Babe Ruth/Mickey Mantle (38 HR each)

Oriole Park at Camden Yards: Adam Jones (146 HR)
As visitor: Alex Rodriguez (34 HR)

Rogers Centre (Blue Jays): Carlos Delgado (175 HR)
As visitor: David Ortiz (41 HR)

Tropicana Field (Rays): Evan Longoria (129 HR)
As visitor: David Ortiz (35 HR)

Yankee Stadium: Aaron Judge (121 HR) (new stadium was opened in 2009)
As visitor: José Bautista (19 HR)

Comerica Park (Tigers): Miguel Cabrera (188 HR)
As visitor: David Ortiz (23 HR)

Kauffman Stadium (Royals): George Brett (136 HR)

As visitor: Juan Gonzalez (22 HR)

Progressive Field (Guardians): Jim Thome (190 HR)

As visitor: Miguel Cabrera (26 HR)

Target Field (Twins): Brian Dozier (80 HR) (opened 2010)

As visitor: Salvador Perez (21 HR)

Angel Stadium: Mike Trout (181 HR)

As visitor: Alex Rodriguez (38 HR)

Minute Maid Park (Astros): Lance Berkman (157 HR)

As visitor: Albert Pujols (35 HR)

Oakland Coliseum (Athletics): Mark McGwire (166) (Reggie Jackson second at 146)

As visitor: Mike Trout/Alex Rodriguez (21 HR each)

T-Mobile Park (Mariners): Kyle Seager (94 HR)

As visitor: Mike Trout (33 HR)

Citizens Bank Park (Phillies): Ryan Howard (198 HR)

As visitor: David Wright (22 HR)

loanDepot Park (Marlins): Giancarlo Stanton (112 HR)

As visitor: Freddie Freeman (16)

Nationals Park: Ryan Zimmerman (116 HR) (after 3 seasons at RFK Nats moved in 2008)

As visitor: Giancarlo Stanton (22 HR)

Truist Park (Braves): Freddie Freeman (70 HR) (Chipper Jones has the record for Turner Field at 266)

As visitor: Juan Soto/Bryce Harper (12 HR each)

American Family Field (Brewers): Ryan Braun (173 HR)

As visitor: Andrew McCutchen (23 HR)

Busch Stadium (Cardinals): Albert Pujols (122 HR)

As visitor: Joey Votto (16 HR)

Great American Ball Park (Reds): Joey Votto (190 HR)

As visitor: Ryan Braun (28 HR)

PNC Park (Pirates): Andrew McCutchen (96 HR)

As visitor: Albert Pujols (35 HR)

Wrigley Field (Cubs): Sammy Sosa (293 HR) (Ernie Banks is second with 290)

As visitor: Willie Mays (54 HR)

Chase Field (D-backs): Paul Goldschmidt (103 HR)

As visitor: Adrián González (21 HR)

Coors Field (Rockies): Todd Helton (227 HR)

As visitor: Barry Bonds (26 HR)

Dodger Stadium: Eric Karros (130 HR) (Ron Cey is second with 123)

As visitor: Barry Bonds (29 HR)

Oracle Park (Giants): Barry Bonds (160 HR)

As visitor: Paul Goldschmidt (15 HR)

Petco Park: Adrián González (65 HR)

As visitor: Nolan Arenado (15 HR)

Yankees record for most at bats in a season – **Alfonso Soriano** logged a Major League-leading 696 at-bats for the Yankees in 2002, a season in which he batted .300/.332/.547 with 39 homers and 102 RBIs in 156 games. **Bobby Richardson** ranks second, with 692 at-bats in 1962.

First Black pitcher in AL/NL history to throw a no-hitter? **Sam Jones**. He struck out six and walked seven for the Cubs in their 4–0 win over the Pirates on May 12, 1955.

That was Jones's first full season in the integrated major leagues. He had previously pitched for the Cleveland Buckeyes in the Negro American League and made a handful of appearances with Cleveland's AL team before being traded to the Cubs in exchange for Hall of Famer **Ralph Kiner**.

Jones was known as "Toothpick" because he was constantly chewing on them. Before the historic game, Cubs broadcaster Harry Creighton told Jones he'd buy him a gold toothpick if he threw a no-hitter. When he did, Creighton followed through and spent \$11 on one (about \$125 today).

Jones had a puzzling 1955 season. He had a ho-hum 4.10 ERA and led the league with 20 losses. He led the NL in strikeouts by a wide margin (with 198, far ahead of **Robin Roberts**, who was

second with 160) but led the league in walks by an even wider margin (with 185, compared to Bob Buhl's 109) and also hit more batters than any pitcher in the majors.

Jones's best season came with the Giants in 1959, when he led the NL in wins (21) and ERA (2.83), and finished second in Cy Young voting. But, as a *Sports Illustrated* article from the following spring recapped, the season ended in disappointment when San Francisco lost seven of its final eight games to lose its grip on the pennant.

The league average attendance this season is 26,460 per game. The A's are averaging 9,129. They drew a larger-than-average crowd at home just once this season, on Opening Day with **Shohei Ohtani** and the Angels in town (26,805). Of the 14 games in the majors this season to draw fewer than 8,000 fans, 13 are A's games. (The other was Rays at Reds on April 17.)

This week's birthdays:

Brooks Robinson	86
Reggie Jackson	77
Rick Reuschel	74
George Brett	70
Jack Morris	68
David Wells	60
John Smoltz	56
Justin Morneau	42

Interesting argument this week on how to rank and compare offensive value—the suggestion was four factors:

Bases per out (**Mike Trout** produces more bases than outs to lead MLB)

Slugging PCT

Runs Generated per 500 AB – driving them in and scoring them.

Games Played - durability counts, you can't contribute if you're not on the field.

THE METS AND HOW NOT TO BUILD AN EXPENSIVE ROSTER

Joe Posnanski observed The New York Mets have a 40-man payroll of \$377 million, the highest payroll, by far, in the history of baseball. It is EIGHTY-TWO MILLION DOLLARS more than the next-highest payroll in the game, the New York Yankees'.

The Baltimore Orioles' payroll is \$82 million. The whole thing.

Now, there is a long history of baseball teams that have spent money poorly. It seems to me that these teams fall into three major traps.

Trap 1: They overspend on older players.

Trap 2: They put too much faith in one good season.

Trap 3: They are paying the price for long-term contracts that have gone upside down.

I say that there are three traps ... but most of the time, it comes down to No. 1. Let's take the 2018 Giants as an example. They had a \$200 million payroll (for the 25-man roster), second-highest in baseball, but they were not a good team at all. Nobody expected anything of them (they had lost 98 games in 2017) and they didn't do anything (they went 73-89) and didn't get out of fourth place after July 14.

So what did they spend their money on?

— They spent \$22 million on team legend **Buster Posey**, who was 31 years old and had an un-Posey-like season with only five home runs and a .382 slugging percentage.

— They spent \$21 million on a 32-year-old **Johnny Cueto**, who made only nine starts.

— They spent about \$40 million on reliever **Mark Melancon** and starter **Jeff Samardzija**, who were each 33, and they combined for 73 mediocre innings.

— They spent \$18.6 million on former hero **Pablo Sandoval**, who was 31 and had become a part-time player.

— They spent \$18.5 million on former hero **Hunter Pence**, who was 35 and had become a part-time player.

— They spent \$28 or so million on a couple of former superstars, **Evan Longoria** and **Andrew McCutchen**, both in their 30s, and they were both pretty meh.

And so on. That Giants' payroll was just about as poorly constructed as you will ever see. All their money was going to 30-something veterans whose better days were behind them. It is true that in 2021, the Giants had a similarly ancient team and they won 107 games — it's not impossible for a veteran team to come together in a semi-magical way.

That's the trap, though. It might work now and again. But you don't want to be old in baseball.

This Mets team with the biggest payroll in baseball history is old. Well, I mean, \$86 million of their dollars go to 38-year-old **Max Scherzer** and 40-year-old **Justin Verlander**. The rest doesn't really matter; when more than a quarter of your 25-man roster payroll goes to players who were playing professional baseball when the first iPhone came out, you are betting on good fortune and a good chiropractor.

And it's not like they're the only ones. **Starling Marte** is 34. **Mark Canha** is 34. **Jeff McNeil** is 31. **Brandon Nimmo** is 30. After the unfortunate injury to **Edwin Diaz** — an unforeseeable bad break — the Mets bullpen is now anchored by 38-year-old **David Robertson**, 37-year-old **Adam Ottavino** and 35-year-old **Brooks Raley**.

Editors note--Makes one think back on the Angels when they signed **Josh Hamilton** (age 32) and **Albert Pujols** (age 33)—how did that work out? Between them one All-Star appearance, one playoff appearance in which the Angels were swept. More evidence that the Braves roster construction that bets on youth feels a lot smarter than the Mets (or the Yankees).

In consecutive series against the Tigers, Rockies, Reds and Nationals, four of the worst teams in the majors, the Mets went only 4-9. As I heard this week, "it's getting late early for the Mets".

DON DENKINGER, UMPIRE WHO MADE A HIGH PROFILE MISTAKE IN 1985 WORLD SERIES, HAS DIED

Denkinger joined the American League staff in 1969. He worked four World Series in the big leagues but was remembered most for a call he didn't get right.

St. Louis had a 3-2 Series lead over Kansas City and was ahead, 1-0, in the bottom of the ninth inning of Game 6, three outs from the title, when pinch-hitter **Jorge Orta** led off with a slow bouncer to the right side. First baseman **Jack Clark** ranged to field the ball and flipped a sidearm toss to reliever **Todd Worrell** covering the bag.

Denkinger signaled safe, but replays showed Worrell caught the throw on the base ahead of the runner. After **Steve Balboni's** single, a bunt, a passed ball, and an intentional walk, pinch-hitter **Dane Iorg** looped a two-run single into right field for a 2-1 walk-off win that forced Game 7. The Royals won, 11-0, the following night for the championship.

Denkinger umpired in many of his era's big games. He worked the plate for World Series Game 7 in 1991, when Minnesota's **Jack Morris** pitched a 10-inning shutout to beat Atlanta, 1-0. He also worked the plate for the 1978 Yankees-Red Sox tiebreaker game at Fenway Park and for **Nolan Ryan's** sixth no-hitter in 1990.

Denkinger is among seven umps to work a pair of perfect games. He was at second base for **Len Barker's** gem in 1981 and at first for **Kenny Rogers'** perfecto in 1994.

THE ROBO UMPs HAVE ARRIVED, AND THEY ARE NOT FAR FROM THE MAJORS

By La Velle E. Neal III

Minneapolis Star Tribune

As early as the second inning Thursday at Target Field, the Padres had problems with the strike zone presented by home plate umpire **Brock Ballou**.

They objected to a few of his decisions throughout the game until Ballou had had enough and ejected San Diego skipper **Bob Melvin** in the eighth. Melvin emerged from the dugout and gave Ballou a few choice words before leaving the field.

On the east side of town, St. Paul Saints manager **Toby Gardenhire** sat in his dugout knowing he would not have a beef with home plate umpire **Randy Rosenberg**.

Rosenberg wasn't calling balls and strikes. The automated ball and strike system (ABS) was.

You may have recently heard something like "Robo-umps are coming to baseball!" This is it, although you'll be disappointed if you were hoping to see actual robots.

In its quest to ensure fair play – among other things – Major League Baseball has tested out an automatic strike zone in the minor leagues and the Arizona Fall League. The testing, which began in 2019, now has reached Class AAA, including the Saints' home at CHS Field.

The Hawk-Eye system is used, and this technology determines a two-dimensional strike zone at the plate. The tech is invisible to us all. Once a pitch is thrown, the home plate umpire is quickly told through an earpiece if the pitch was a strike or ball.

On Thursday, during the Saints game against Indianapolis, there wasn't much delay from Rosenberg when he called strikes.

"It's interesting," Gardenhire said. "You get less complaining in the dugout because there is less to argue about. You watch the games on TV, and you want the umpires to be right. When a pitch is borderline, it's a really hard job as an umpire back there to get everything right."

Alex Kirilloff, who played 10 games with the Saints before joining the Twins, joked: "It definitely takes the arguing out of it – unless you want to yell up at the box for it to be recalibrated."

The ABS will eventually be promoted to the majors once adjustments have been made following this test period.

The league has not yet determined how, or when, it will be used.

The technology is being used in two different ways now in Triple-A.

For the first three games of a six-game series, the ABS system calls balls and strikes. For the next three games, the umpire calls the game with each team given three challenges. Managers aren't allowed to challenge pitches but the catcher, pitcher or hitter can ask for one. The ABS is then used as the final arbiter.

This has added another layer of strategy to games, as teams don't want to use their challenges too soon. That can be tough. During a May 7 game against Nashville, Saints right-hander Aaron Sanchez was pounded for six runs in the first inning – and he used two challenges along the way.

This is the format that will likely reach the majors, and it will inject some excitement, as Saints fans found out May 5 with the first challenge in CHS Field history. Nashville's **Andruw Monasterio** challenged a low pitch by **Simeon Woods-Richardson** by tapping his helmet.

The challenge was played on the scoreboard, resembling a challenge in tennis. A graphic showed a ball traveling toward the plate, and fans cheered when the pitch was ruled a strike.

“All the guys start cheering from the dugout when you get it right,” Gardenhire said. “It’s entertaining for the fans to see the screen read ball or strike. They are fine with it either way.”

Traditionalists want humans to play and judge baseball, but the stakes are too high. As baseball gets cozier with sports gambling companies – there are sports books at three MLB stadiums and one is opening next to Wrigley Field in Chicago – there’s a heightened desire to avoid incorrect calls affecting outcomes.

MLB is not allowing umpires to be interviewed, so their thoughts on this are unknown.

Back on the field, the recently embraced art of pitch framing is being threatened with extinction by ABS technology. Twins catcher **Ryan Jeffers** said framing is a big part of his game, one he’s worked years to develop.

Fear not, Ryan. Some believe negative pitch framing, in which making strikes look like balls to fool batters into using a challenge, could be the corresponding move.

“I’m against it,” Jeffers said of ABS. “I think and I hope it will come in more as a challenge system, at least at first. That’s a happy medium between what the players want and what the league wants.”

RE-BIRTH OF HINCHCLIFFE STADIUM IN PATERSON, NJ

Dan Cichalski, mlb.com

PATERSON, N.J. – Before city officials cut the ribbon to rededicate the renovated Hinchliffe Stadium on Friday, there was a lot of talk of ghosts. “Field of Dreams” was cited several times, and stars of the Negro Leagues who played on the field here were mentioned. Plus, there were several shout-outs to the Eastside High School Ghosts and their rivals, the Kennedy Knights.

Come Thanksgiving, Hinchliffe Stadium will once again see Eastside and Kennedy face off on the gridiron. But before that stands a summer of baseball with the New Jersey Jackals of the Frontier League at the former home of the New York Black Yankees, New York Cubans and Newark Eagles.

It hosted Negro National League games, barnstorming teams and exhibitions that included white Major League clubs in the years before **Jackie Robinson**. In all, 17 of the 37 Hall of Famers inducted for their ties to the Negro Leagues are a part of Hinchliffe Stadium’s history.

Attending the dedication were MLB Network's **Harold Reynolds** and Yankees adviser Omar Minaya, six-time All-Star **Willie Randolph**, **Tony Clark**, executive director of the MLB Players Association, three-time Manager of the Year **Joe Maddon** and MLB Network insider Tom Verducci.

Built in about seven months and opened in 1932, Hinchliffe Stadium was condemned in 1997 after general maintenance and basic repairs went unaddressed. The school district – which then as now controls the stadium – was given a \$4.8 million estimate to renovate the site, or \$4 million to tear it down.

Instead, nothing was done, and the stadium sat abandoned for 24 years.

In April 2021 ground was broken on what became a \$103 million renovation that refurbished the stadium for baseball, football and track, along with space for a food court, a museum and an adjacent senior housing complex and parking garage.

The museum, slated to open this fall, sits some 450 feet from home plate, beyond the center-field fence. It will celebrate and honor Paterson's own **Larry Doby** and the Negro Leagues as an official extension of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City.

This weekend the Jackals open their 54-game home schedule, which includes nods to the past with Negro League Night on Sunday, a Juneteenth celebration on June 19 and Larry Doby Day on July 5, the 76th anniversary of his debut.

The New York Black Yankees

As of yet, no box score proof has been found of any Hall of Famers playing for the Black Yankees at Hinchliffe Stadium, but in 1933, the ballclub left its home ballpark in New York, Dyckman Oval, in favor of barnstorming. It played enough games at Hinchliffe for the stadium to be listed as its home ballpark in the Seamheads database.

Notable players on the '33 Black Yankees included Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe, Bill Yancey, George Scales and John Beckwith. With the exception of 1936, the team would play most of its home games in Paterson through the 1938 season.

Martín Dihigo, Alex Pompez and the New York Cubans

The Black Yankees weren't the only team to use Hinchliffe as a home field. The New York Cubans under team president Alex Pompez and player-manager **Martín Dihigo** used the stadium as a secondary home field in 1935 and '36.

While he wasn't a player, Pompez was an influential executive who helped organize the first championship series between Negro clubs and installed permanent lights at New York's Dyckman Oval, which the Cubans used concurrently with Hinchliffe as a home field. Whether or

not Pompey accompanied his team to Paterson regularly, his presence and influence was there whenever his team took the field.

Dihigo was so good at every aspect of the game that he was called “El Maestro,” or “The Master” – a Cuban contemporary of **Babe Ruth**, perhaps the **Shohei Ohtani** of his day. With data available to date, Seamheads credits Dihigo with more than 100 victories on the mound, more than 120 home runs at the plate and more than 300 victories as manager.

Ray Dandridge, Leon Day, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, Biz Mackey, Effa Manley, Mule Suttles, Willie Wells and the Newark Eagles

Effa Manley’s impact is well known, thanks in part to her induction into the Hall of Fame in 2006. She and her husband, Abe, built the Eagles into a powerhouse that won the 1946 Negro World Series and sold the contracts of Larry Doby to Cleveland and **Monte Irvin** to the Giants, with each one contributing to World Series championships within five seasons of their debuts. Manley regularly scheduled Eagles home games at Hinchliffe, giving more fans a chance to see these Black stars in person.

Cool Papa Bell, Oscar Charleston, Josh Gibson and Judy Johnson

In September 1933, the Pittsburgh Crawfords and Black Yankees squared off for the “colored championship of the world,” with the third and deciding game played at Hinchliffe on Sept. 5. Despite having these four future Hall of Famers in their lineup, the Crawfords were defeated, 6-3, in front of more than 5,000 fans, the largest crowd of the season. **Walter Cannady**, the Black Yankees’ second baseman and cleanup hitter, tripled and hit a two-run homer. **Oscar Charleston** also hit one out of the park but only got credit for a double when the umpires ruled that **John Henry Russell** failed to touch third and was called out.

Josh Gibson, whose home run exploits are legendary today, burnished that reputation with some impressive feats at Hinchliffe. The slugging catcher frequently played as a visitor with the Crawfords and the Homestead Grays, with several notable home runs earning ink in local newspapers. In one 10-2 Homestead victory over the Black Yankees in 1942, The Paterson News reported that Gibson, “famed as one of the greatest hitters in pro baseball (white or colored)” hit a “high, lazy clout that hit directly ON TOP of the centerfield screen, and bounced back into the Stadium. Another fraction of an inch and it would have been gone for good.”

Six Pirates, three barnstorming pitchers and a Native American legend

On May 7, 1933, the Pittsburgh Pirates had a day off between games in Brooklyn and Boston, so they detoured to Paterson. **Honus Wagner**, in his first season as hitting coach for his former club, was celebrated in the city where he played for the Paterson Silk Weavers in 1896-97 before joining the National League’s Louisville Colonels.

The Pirates' starting lineup included five future Hall of Famers who played half the game: **Lloyd Waner** in left field, Freddie Lindstrom in center, **Paul Waner** in right field, **Pie Traynor** at third base and **Arky Vaughan** at shortstop. Wagner, then 59 years old and three years away from entering the Hall in its inaugural class, hit a pinch-hit double for the Paterson City Club in the ninth inning and scored in a 7-4 Pittsburgh victory.

On July 8, 1933, **Charles "Chief" Bender** brought his barnstorming House of David team through northern New Jersey to play the Paterson City Club. The next day, football Hall of Famer – and former New York Giants outfielder – **Jim Thorpe** and his barnstorming outfit, the Oklahoma Indians, played a doubleheader against those same Clubbers, as the papers called them.

A year later, just 10 days after his Cardinals finished off a Game 7 World Series victory against the Tigers and four days after being named NL MVP, **Dizzy Dean** and his brother **Paul ("Daffy") Dean** barnstormed through Paterson with the Brooklyn Farmers to play the Black Yankees at Hinchliffe on Oct. 19, 1934. Dizzy started the game in right field but took the mound in the fourth, fanning three in two innings in a 10-3 victory for the Farmers.

Ray Brown, Buck Leonard and Jud Wilson

The Homestead Grays may be the first team many think of when asked to name Negro Leagues franchises, and a lot of that has to do with Josh Gibson's nine seasons with the club (compared to his four with the Crawfords). But if Gibson was "the Black Babe Ruth," **Buck Leonard** was considered "the Black Lou Gehrig," and though researchers have only found 106 home runs to date, he was known as one of the most dangerous Negro Leagues hitters in his time.

Ray Brown is credited with 125 wins against 50 losses, a .714 winning percentage in 233 games (167 starts) that would produce a record of 306-123 over the 576 games that Hall of Fame starting pitchers averaged.

Jud Wilson was considered one of the Negro Leagues' hardest hitters, with a nickname – "Boojum" – derived from the sound of the baseball bouncing off outfield walls after he hit it. Credited with at least 100 home runs, he also hit quite a few over the walls.

Roy Campanella

"Campy" passed through Hinchliffe as a 19-year-old catcher with the Baltimore Elite Giants in 1941. He went 0-for-3, according to one known box score, but more may yet be found because he first suited up for Baltimore at the age of 16 in '38.

Satchel Paige

While Paige famously jumped from team to team in the Negro Leagues, and was known to have been a part of some clubs that played at Hinchliffe in the 1930s, there is no evidence yet that he appeared in a game there before pitching for parts of six seasons in the American League.

But in 1966, at the age of 60 (maybe), he signed on with the traveling Indianapolis Clowns and pitch two innings at Hinchliffe without giving up a hit against a team called the New York Stars.

Babe Ruth ... and boxing?

While the Great Bambino played in documented exhibition games in several northern New Jersey cities, Hinchliffe wasn't one of those sites. But in 1946, he made one of his regular appearances as a headlining guest at an amateur Diamond Gloves boxing event, with coverage in the days leading up to the bouts promoting his attendance.

"Babe has been a highlight of the Diamond Gloves for years," The Paterson News reported the following day. "He loves them, as he attested last night. 'I've been coming over for many years, and I will keep on coming,' he said."

Boxing stars Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis would appear as guest referees at Hinchliffe bouts and other pugilists such as Jake LaMotta, Rocky Graziano and Max Baer would make appearances over the years.

Larry Doby – before he was a professional

Before joining the Newark Eagles, Doby was a star for Eastside High School playing baseball and football and running track at Hinchliffe (as well as playing basketball in the colder months). When he graduated in June 1942, The Morning Call lamented his exit from the prep sports scene. But he wasn't done competing. In fact, he'd already tried out for the Eagles (believed to be before a game at Hinchliffe in May 1942) and made his debut for them in a game at Yankee Stadium on May 31 – playing under the name Larry Walker to preserve his amateur eligibility. He also continued playing for semi-pro teams at Hinchliffe throughout that summer, in addition to appearing in 23 games for the Eagles.

The stadium was built at first for football, serving as the home field for Eastside and Paterson Central – and as the site of their annual Thanksgiving Day showdown. In 1941, more than 12,000 fans turned out for Doby's last intracity rivalry game – and he didn't disappoint, scoring two touchdowns, setting up another with a pass and kicking an extra point.

KINGS OF THE BOX OFFICE

Editor's note—one of the great advantages of retirement is time to explore and read. Found this on a blog called Baseball's Best and Worst.

Eight clubs (from New York to Milwaukee) enjoy excellent fan support
G. Scott Thomas

The positive news first.

Eight of Major League Baseball's 30 franchises have formed exceptionally strong links with their fan bases, according to a new analysis of attendance data for the past 10 seasons. This elite group runs the gamut from the largest market in the majors (New York Yankees) to the smallest (Milwaukee Brewers).

Their success has been certified by my breakdowns of each club's **fan support index (FSI)** for the decade from 2013 through 2022. (The two schedules played under Covid restrictions — 2020 and 2021 — were excluded from my calculations for obvious reasons, leaving a data pool of eight seasons per team.)

I've written about the FSI on several occasions, though it doesn't hurt to reiterate a brief explanation. The index is a ratio of a club's home attendance and its on-field record, plotted around a 100-point benchmark.

This is the important part: A score of precisely 100 points indicates that a club's attendance is commensurate with its quality on the field. A higher index suggests box-office strength that exceeds expectations, while a two-digit FSI is a sign of lethargy.

The FSI is elastic, requiring less support for a bad team than a good one. Here's an example from last year: The Toronto Blue Jays easily outdrew the Texas Rangers in home attendance: 2.65 million vs. 2.01 million. But it was considerably easier to root for the Jays (92-70 record) than the Rangers (68-94), a fact taken into account by the FSI. Texas actually finished with a higher index (111.3 points) than Toronto (108.6), signifying that the Rangers' fan support was more impressive under the circumstances.

I took each team's eight indexes from the 2013-2022 period and counted the number that exceeded the 100-point threshold and the number that fell short. The result was akin to a win-loss record. The Yankees, for example, finished 8-0, which means that their FSI exceeded 100 in all eight seasons.

I used the resulting records to divide the 30 clubs into five levels of fan support:

- Excellent support (8-0 record)
- Above-average support (7-1 or 6-2 records)
- Average support (5-3, 4-4, or 3-5 records)
- Below-average support (2-6 or 1-7 records)
- Poor support (0-8 record)

Scroll below to see a rundown and a few explanatory notes for each group. You'll see why the Yankees, Brewers, and their six comrades in the excellent echelon are rated so highly — and why the Miami Marlins, Oakland Athletics, Tampa Bay Rays, and four other franchises have so much to worry about.

Excellent support

- Chicago Cubs (8-0)
- Colorado Rockies (8-0)
- Los Angeles Angels (8-0)
- Los Angeles Dodgers (8-0)
- Milwaukee Brewers (8-0)
- New York Yankees (8-0)
- St. Louis Cardinals (8-0)
- San Francisco Giants (8-0)
- Notes: Market size can be an important factor in box-office success. The nation's three largest metropolitan areas — New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago — are represented by four clubs in this group. They're joined by St. Louis (renowned for decades as a baseball hotbed), San Francisco (an annual leader in the attendance derby), and a pair of smaller markets where baseball has proven to be consistently popular (Colorado and Milwaukee).

Above-average support

- Boston Red Sox (6-2)
- Detroit Tigers (6-2)
- San Diego Padres (6-2)
- Notes: Two old-line clubs, the Red Sox and Tigers, inspire fan loyalty that exceeds the national average, albeit falling short of the elite level. They're joined by the Padres, who benefit from being the sole big-league team in San Diego since the departure of the football Chargers.

Average support

- Texas Rangers (5-3)
- Toronto Blue Jays (5-3)
- New York Mets (4-4)
- Washington Nationals (4-4)
- Minnesota Twins (3-5)
- Philadelphia Phillies (3-5)
- Notes: Here are six markets where attendance is tightly synchronized with expectations, typically rising and falling with the home team's on-field fortunes. Five of these six metros are among the largest in North America: Dallas, New York, Philadelphia, Toronto, and Washington. Minnesota rounds out the midlevel group.

Below-average support

- Atlanta Braves (2-6)
- Cincinnati Reds (2-6)

- Houston Astros (2-6)
- Kansas City Royals (2-6)
- Arizona Diamondbacks (1-7)
- Baltimore Orioles (1-7)
- Notes: Attendance is robust in Atlanta and Houston, as it should be. The Braves and Astros annually field two of the best squads in baseball, collectively winning three of the past six World Series. But the FSI suggests that both markets are still underperforming at the box office. Also falling short of expectations more often than not are Arizona, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Kansas City.

Poor support

- Chicago White Sox (0-8)
- Cleveland Guardians (0-8)
- Miami Marlins (0-8)
- Oakland Athletics (0-8)
- Pittsburgh Pirates (0-8)
- Seattle Mariners (0-8)
- Tampa Bay Rays (0-8)
- Notes: These are the seven clubs with real cause for worry, having fallen short of the FSI benchmark in all eight non-Covid seasons since 2013. The obvious candidates are here: Miami, Oakland, Pittsburgh, and Tampa Bay. But so is Chicago, where the White Sox are badly overshadowed by the Cubs. And Seattle, where the Mariners have made more progress on the field than at the box office. And Cleveland, where the then-Indians were once so popular that they sold out 455 straight games from 1995 to 2001, a feat the current Guardians find impossible to imagine.

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE ANSWERS

Winners of multiple World Series since 2000—who did they beat?

Red Sox

2004, 4 games to 0, Manny Ramirez MVP

St. Louis Cardinals

2007, 4 games to 0, Mike Lowell MVP

Colorado Rockies

2013, 4 games to 2, David Ortiz MVP

St. Louis Cardinals

2018, 4 games to 1, Steve Pearce MVP

Los Angeles Dodgers

San Francisco Giants

2010, 4 games to 1, Edgar Renteria MVP	Texas Rangers
2012, 4 games to 0, Pablo Sandoval MVP	Detroit Tigers
2014, 4 games to 3, Madison Bumgarner MVP	Kansas City Royals

New York Yankees

2000, 4 games to 1, Derek Jeter MVP	New York Mets
2009, 4 games to 2, Hideki Matsui MVP	Philadelphia Phillies

St. Louis Cardinals

2006, 4 games to 1, David Eckstein MVP	Detroit Tigers
2011, 4 games to 3, David Freese MVP	Texas Rangers

Houston Astros

2017, 4 games to 3, George Springer MVP	Los Angeles Dodgers
2022, 4 games to 2, Jeremy Peña MVP	Philadelphia Phillies

Lefty slugger who was AL MVP in 1973

I hit 563 HRs for 4 teams, all in the AL, led the league 4 times

I led the majors in strikeouts 3 times and the AL another 2. My 2597 career whiffs is a record.

I was MVP of the 1973 and 1977 World Series.

Who am I?

Reggie Jackson

Since 2000 six teams won their only World Series appearance. Name them.

2022, 4 games to 2 NL	Braves beat Astros
2019, 4 games to 3 NL	Nationals beat Astros

2016, 4 games to 3 NL	Cubs beat Indians
2005, 4 games to 0 AL	White Sox beat Astros
2003, 4 games to 2 NL	Marlins beat Yankees
2002, 4 games to 3 AL	Angels beat Giants

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