

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

6.4.2023

Good morning baseball fans,

Today's edition is sent to you from Los Angeles where I am on a bucket list adventure following the Yankees in Seattle against the Mariners, and now the Dodgers. Some photos and observations from the trip are later in this issue.

In today's edition Unassisted triple play, All Star game streaks, Jayson Stark's wonderful weird stats.

Longer pieces include broadcast troubles in San Diego, **Aaron Boone's** ejection habit and What if Moneyball was in 2022? Enjoy.

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Four players have won multiple MVP awards at different positions.

1935 AL MVP as 1B, 1940 AL MVP as outfielder. Played in 1934, 35, 40 and 45 World Series for Detroit. HOF.

1944 and 46 MVP as outfielder, 1948 as 1B. Played whole career with one NL team. Batted and throws lefty. HOF.

MVP 2003, 2005, 2007. Played SS, 3B and DH. 3115 hits and 5th all-time in HRs with 696.

1982 MVP as infielder, 1989 as outfielder. HOF. Hit .414 in 1982 World Series.

I am in the Hall of Fame

Lefty pitcher

I went 283-237 with a 3.45 ERA

I played 25 seasons, 20 in the AL.

I led the majors in games started in 1965 and 1966.

I pitched in the 1965 World Series, 1970 ALS, 1976 NLCS and 1982 World Series.

Who am I?

I hit the most career HRs (612) without winning an MVP. Bonds, Aaron, Ruth, Pujols, ARod, Mays and Griffey Jr. are ahead of me on the career HR list all won MVPs.

Closest I got to MVP was 4th in 2003 when I led the majors with 47 HRs for the Phillies.

Lefty batter. 1B/DH.

Played for 6 teams over 22 seasons, the most in Cleveland.

Played in the 1995 World Series against the Braves, 1997 World Series against the Marlins.

Who am I?

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Four Braves players hit at least 30 homers and steal at least 30 bases in the same season--**Hank Aaron** (1963), **Dale Murphy** (1983), **Ron Gant** (1990 & '91) and **Ronald Acuña Jr.** (2019)

May 22 — **Tyler Rogers**, Giants right hander throws scoreless outing versus Twins

May 24 — **Taylor Rogers** Giants left hander throws scoreless outing versus Twins

So what's so historic about that, you ask? It's the first time in big-league history that twins pitched against the Twins in the same series!

On May 21 Yankee manager **Aaron Boone** and Reds manager **David Bell** were both ejected. Their dads **Bob Boone** and **Buddy Bell** both managed but never were ejected from the same game. However, on April 28, 2001, Boone's Reds visited Bell's Rockies at Coors Field. Both Aaron and Bob got tossed.

Andrew McCutchen hit his 9th leadoff homer as a Pirate this week, fourth all-time in franchise history. **Barry Bonds** (20 leadoff home runs as a Pirate) holds the team record.

Would you have known that the AL stolen base leaders in 2011 were **Coco Crisp** of the A's and **Brett Gardner** of the Yankees, tied with 49?

Freddie Freeman had 34 extra base hits in May, breaking the Dodgers record for extra base hits in a month previously held by **Duke Snider**.

The Red Sox are 3-9 against teams from the National League Central. The other teams in the AL East are 19-8.

The Rays are the first team since the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers to lead the majors in home runs and stolen bases through the end of May. The Dodgers went 98-55-1 and beat the Yankees in the World Series

Ryan McMahon, Rockies infielder had a week. He hit .482/.548/1.074 with two doubles, a triple, four homers, 11 RBIs and 13 hits in seven games.

Hunter Greene, Reds fireballing right hander also has a week. He made two starts, pitched 12 innings and allowed only two hits and one run while striking out 19. He also became the fourth-fastest pitcher ever to 250 career strikeouts, behind only **Spencer Strider**, **Corbin Burnes** and **Kerry Wood**.

Interesting observations from Joe Posnanski in a piece on the drop off in 300 game winners.

Bob Gibson won 251 games. It's interesting, Gibson never really had a huge win season — he won 20 five times and never won more than 23. You could certainly argue that based on how well he pitched — a career 2.91 ERA and a 127 ERA+ — he should have won many more games. And he probably should have.

But if you look more closely, you realize: Gibson simply didn't start *nearly* enough games to win 300. He didn't make 30 starts in a season until he was 26, and he retired at 39. That seems like a pretty sizable career, but compared to the 300-game winners, it just isn't. Look at the number of starts of the 300-game winners who were Gibson contemporaries:

Nolan Ryan: 773 starts

Don Sutton: 756 starts

Phil Niekro: 716 starts

Steve Carlton: 709 starts

Gaylord Perry: 690 starts

Tom Seaver: 647 starts

Bob Gibson: 482 starts*

This is doubly true of **Pedro Martinez. I don't think anyone has ever pitched better than Martinez in his prime, but the prime was short, there were injuries, and he made only 409 starts in his career.*

This is an aside, but I should say that it's not IMPOSSIBLE to win 300 games with so few starts — but you basically need to be a pitcher like **Lefty Grove**. He won 300 games in only 457 starts.

Grove played for some great hitting teams. But Posnanski's theory is he finished what he started. Of the 268 games he won as a starter, he completed 242 of them. That's 90 percent.

Where does that rank among 300-game winners? What a great question that I asked myself! We'll look at only modern 300-game winners, since essentially those 19th-century guys completed 100% of their victories.

Modern 300-game winners who completed the highest percentage of their starter victories:

1. **Eddie Plank**, 97.3%
2. **Pete Alexander**, 96%
3. **Lefty Grove**, 90.3%
4. **Walter Johnson**, 90.2%
5. **Warren Spahn**, 89.9%
6. **Christy Mathewson**, 88.6%
7. **Early Wynn**, 77.8%
8. **Gaylord Perry**, 74.1%
9. **Steve Carlton**, 66.1%
10. **Tom Seaver**, 60%
11. **Phil Niekro**, 59.6%
12. **Nolan Ryan**, 51.3%
13. **Don Sutton**, 47%
14. **Randy Johnson**, 33.2%
15. **Roger Clemens**, 26%
16. **Greg Maddux**, 25.9%
17. **Tom Glavine**, 18.4%

At this moment, **Justin Verlander**, who probably won't get to 300 victories (age 40, 246 wins) but is our only hope for a long, long, long time (probably ever) has completed 10.5% of his victories. But that percentage is obviously going down, down, down. Since 2017, he has won 73 games and completed only three of them.

Hall of Fame infielder **Joe Sewell** was known for hardly ever striking out, but on this day in 1930, White Sox starter **Pat Caraway** became one of only two pitchers to strike out Sewell twice in one game. Sewell finished the '30 season with 3 strikeouts.

Sewell had 414 plate appearances in 1930 and didn't strike out again after Caraway fanned him May 26, even though he played 83. Sewell's only other strikeout that season came May 10 against **George Earnshaw** of the Philadelphia A's. The only other pitcher to strike out Sewell twice in one game was Cy Warmerth of the Washington Senators on May 13, 1923.

Sewell never struck out more than 20 times in a season, which he did in his second full season in the majors, in 1922. Over the final nine years of his career, he never struck out more than nine times. That nine-strikeout year came in '28, when he tied for the MLB lead with 155 games

played. That year, no player with more than 400 plate appearances struck out fewer than 10 times. Sewell had 678 plate appearances, tied for the eighth most in the AL.

In the Live Ball era (since 1920) there have been 15 individual seasons where a player has had at least 600 plate appearances and single-digit strikeouts. Six of them belong to Sewell.

In the Pirates' otherwise forgettable 14-4 loss to the Giants on Monday, Pirates outfielder **Jack Suwinski** launched two homers into McCovey Cove, becoming the only player besides **Barry Bonds** to accomplish that twice in one game. Bonds, you won't be particularly surprised to hear, did it in two different games -- on May 10, 2000, against Cardinals pitchers **Andy Benes** and **Heathcliff Slocumb**, and then again on May 18, 2002, against Marlins hurlers **Brad Penny** and **Vic Darensbourg**.

Suwinski's impressive splash feat does come with a footnote, though, since his second homer came off position player **Brett Wisely**, who delivered a 59.4 mph "slider" that did not fool Suwinski. Even with the paltry velocity, it came off the bat at 108.5 mph and traveled 414 feet.

Aaron Judge homered twice on Monday against the Mariners. Judge's 31 games with two or more homers since the start of the 2017 season are six more than anyone else. The Padres' **Manny Machado** (25 multi-homer games) is second.

The Rays are the first team to 40 wins.

Since 1996 -- the first full season with at least one Wild Card in each league after the '95 campaign was limited to 144 games due to the strike that began in 1994 -- 91 of 156 eventual division champions held at least a share of their division lead entering June 1. That's 58 percent of division winners.

Pay special attention, Rays, Twins, Rangers, Braves, Brewers and Dodgers fans -- those teams are our current division leaders heading into June.

Last season, three of the six division leaders on June 1 went on to win their divisions. In the American League, the Yankees and Astros each won their divisions, while the Twins, who led the AL Central entering June, missed the postseason entirely. In the NL, the Dodgers won their

division, but the Mets and Brewers, who led the East and Central entering June, respectively, did not. The Mets clinched a Wild Card spot, but the Brewers missed the playoffs.

Since 1996, 14 of the 26 World Series winners, excluding 2020, led their divisions entering June. Before the Astros last year, the last winner in a full season to do so was the '18 Red Sox.

The defending champion Astros are not in first place entering June. How rare is that? Not as rare as you might think. Of the 25 teams to win the World Series since 1996 and play in May the next year, just seven have found themselves in first place through May that subsequent year.

Memorial Day is the point in the baseball season when teams start to run out of excuses. Recent history suggests teams can recover from a poor two or even three or four months, especially under an expanded postseason format.

But seven of last year's 12 postseason qualifiers are, at some level, a disappointment. And sorry, not every struggling club will be the 2019 Nationals, the 2021 Braves or the 2022 Phillies.

The 2019 Nats won the World Series after their record was 19-31 on May 23. The 2021 Braves won the Series even though they were 52-55 on Aug 1. The 2022 Phillies reached the Series after replacing manager **Joe Girardi** with **Rob Thomson** with a 23-29 record on June 3.

Perhaps one of this year's projected contenders will go on such a run. Maybe even two or three of them will. But all seven? Not going to happen.

Here are the Sorry Seven:

- Mariners, 28-26
- Blue Jays, 28-26
- Mets, 27-27
- Phillies, 25-28
- Padres, 24-29
- Guardians, 24-29
- Cardinals, 24-32

The Mets spent May hovering around the .500 mark, never getting more than three games over or under.

After defeating the Dodgers in the 2022 NLDS, this was supposed to be the year the Padres challenged their rivals for NL West supremacy. However, San Diego hasn't been more than three games above .500 all season, and it has been below the mark every day since May 12.

The Blue Jays were expected to challenge for the AL East title in 2023, but they find themselves in fourth place, nine games behind the first-place Rays and 3 1/2 games out in the AL Wild Card race.

Coming off four straight postseason appearances and an NL Central title in 2022, the Cardinals started off 10-24 -- their worst record through 34 games since 1907 (9-25).

After ending a 20-year playoff drought last season, the Mariners haven't played poorly in 2023, going 29-28 with a +22 run differential. However, the AL West has been tougher than anticipated due to the emergence of the Rangers.

Not much has gone right for last year's NL champs Phillies, who have spent much of 2023 below .500. Philadelphia just got swept by the Mets and are 10-19 since April 30

And if you are tracking the AL East standings--the latest into a season that an entire division has been above .500 was the NL East in 2005, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. All five teams were over .500 through October 1, the second-to-last day of the season. The Nationals then lost their finale to finish 81-81.

Mookie Betts recorded his 21st and 22nd career multi-HR game out of the leadoff spot this week, two more than anyone else in MLB history. The two players are tied for second are **Alfonso Soriano and George Springer** (19 each).

The Dodgers' all-time leader in leadoff home runs is **Davey Lopes**, 28 (Betts and **Joc Pederson** tied for 2nd with 21)

Impressive power display from **Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani** in the Angels' 12-5 drubbing of the White Sox. Trout hit a 461-foot homer, and Ohtani hit two that traveled 459 and 425.

The D'backs, Rays and Mets have never had a league MVP.

Dodgers pitchers have led the NL in ERA 6 years in a row.

Did you know that by rule, if you throw your glove at a batted ball and hit it the rule is an automatic triple?

Fernando Tatis Jr. had three doubles, four RBI and a stolen base in yesterday's Padres win over the Marlins. He's the eighth NL / AL player since 1901 to reach all of those marks in game.

Player	2B	SB	RBI	Date	Team
Fernando Tatis Jr.	3	1	4	2023-06-01	SDP
Mark Reynolds	3	1	5	2009-06-12	ARI
Kevin Young	3	1	4	1998-08-04	PIT
Joe Judge	3	1	4	1933-08-27	BOS
Eddie Brown	3	1	4	1927-09-30	BSN
Johnny Mostil	3	1	4	1924-08-30	CHW
Jimmy O'Connell	3	1	6	1923-06-01	NYG
John Anderson	3	2	4	1901-05-05	MLA

Mike Trout has a shot at his 10th consecutive All-Star game start. Since the game debuted in 1933 only 8 players have done that:

Rod Carew, Twins/Angels

18 seasons (1967-1984) at 2B/1B

Cal Ripken Jr., Orioles

13 seasons (1989-2001) at SS/3B

George Brett, Royals

11 seasons (1976-1986) at 3B

Ken Griffey Jr., Mariners/Reds

11 seasons (1990-2000) at OF

Willie Mays, Giants

10 seasons (1957-1966) at OF

Johnny Bench, Reds

10 seasons (1969-1978) at C

Ozzie Smith, Cardinals

10 seasons (1983-1992) at SS

Wade Boggs, Red Sox/Yankees

10 seasons (1987-1996) at 3B

Pudge Rodriguez, Mike Piazza and ARod all started 9 straight.

Players who made the All-Star game but didn't start 10 in a row include **Hank Aaron** (21), **Stan Musial** (20), **Carl Yastrzemski** (15), **Brooks Robinson** (15), **Yogi Berra** (15), **Mickey Mantle** (14), **Al Kaline** (13)



Mickey Mantle played 18 seasons, holds the Yankees record for All-Star appearances with 20 (from 1959-1962 there were two All-Star games each year).

Impressive Kids

Tony Conigliaro (24 home runs as a teenager, all in 1964, for the Red Sox) holds the record for most HRs in a season by a teenager.

Some other teenagers who came up big:

Bryce Harper at age 19 in his rookie campaign with the Nationals in 2012 hit .270/.340/.477 over 139 games with 22 home runs, 59 RBIs and 18 stolen bases. He finished the season with a 5.2 WAR, the most in the modern era for a teenage position player, and his 57 extra-base hits are the most in a teenage season in the modern era. Bryce was named a National League All-Star and the Rookie of the Year, he hit his first postseason home run that year.

Mel Ott's Hall of Fame career started in 1926 at age 17, but his breakout effort came two years later at the ripe young age of 19. In 124 games for the New York Giants, Ott batted .322/.397/.524 with 18 home runs and 77 RBIs.

Ken Griffey Jr. at age 19 hit 16 home runs, drove in 61 runs and stole 16 bases for the Mariners in his debut 1989 season, hitting .264/.329/.420 in his 127 games.

Juan Soto at age 19 hit .292/.406/.517 with 22 homers and 70 RBIs in his 116 games for the Nationals.

Ty Cobb had debuted with the Tigers in 1905 at 18 and played just 41 games; then as a 19 year old he upped that total to 98 games and hit .316/.355/.394 with a home run (it was the dead-ball era, after all), 41 RBIs and 23 stolen bases.

Cesar Cedeno played 90 games for Houston, hitting .310/.340/.451 with seven home runs, 42 RBIs and 17 stolen bases as a 19 year old.

Mickey Mantle started his legendary Yankees career as a 19-year-old in 1951. He made his first start on Opening Day, batting third for New York against the Red Sox, and recorded his first hit with an RBI single. He was sent to the Minors after a slump, but made it back to the big leagues and finished the year with a .267/.349/.443 slash line, adding 13 home runs and 65 RBIs.

Speaking of kids, there hasn't been a 19-year-old catcher in the big leagues since Pudge Rodriguez in 1991 but the Padres have a 17 year old prospect **Ethan Salas**, looks to be on a fast track. At age 16 he was assigned to Low-A Lake Elsinore Storm. He made quite a splash: he

doubled, singled and walked in his three plate appearances, meaning he enters his last day as a 16-year-old with a 1.000 on-base percentage in the minor leagues.

The Storm now feature both the youngest and the oldest roster members in the minor leagues. At 47 years old, “Padre for life” Matt LaChappa, who has been using a wheelchair since suffering a heart attack while warming up for a game in 1996, is on the Lake Elsinore roster in perpetuity, a gesture by the team that ensures he does not lose his health insurance.

2007 Hall of Fame induction—**Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn** – the crowd was especially large, **with 82,000 fans** jamming the ceremony, a throng roughly 40 times larger than Cooperstown’s listed population at the time (2,032).

The Oakland A’s won back-to-back games for the first time this season when they beat Atlanta two straight.

The A’s ended May 12-45 with a -193 run differential.

They’re on pace to finish 94 games under .500. And there was actually a point this week when the A’s were on pace to finish (gasp) *102 games under .500* (as in 30-132). Then they somehow won two in a row against the Braves

They’ve already reached an agreement to leave their city, and attendance is so low and games are so quiet, at least one pitcher has taken to turning down his PitchCom device out of paranoia.

They could give up 1,100 runs. The only two teams since 1900 to do it:

The 1930 Baker Bowl Phillies (1,199 runs). Fourteen pitchers threw a pitch for this team. Eleven of them had an ERA of 6.75 or higher. They only missed winning the ERA title by 410 runs, though.

1996 Tigers (1,103 runs). There were 27 pitchers who pitched for this team. Exactly one of them had a winning record. That was the closer, Gregg Olson.

They could get outscored by 500 runs. Since 1889 the biggest gap was the 1932 Red Sox, outscored by 349 so this is historic pace.

I know this is a baseball newsletter but worth mentioning--the most dominant team in sports right now must be Oklahoma softball. The Sooners extended its NCAA record with their 50th consecutive win yesterday defeating Tennessee 9-0 in the Women's College World Series. Oklahoma, chasing a third consecutive national championship, is an unfathomable 58-1 this season, outscoring opponents 489-56, and is **173-8 over the last three seasons**.

Longest softball game in NCAA history--May 11, 1991, Utah and Creighton met in the WAC tournament. It lasted 31 innings. The game ended 1-0 in Creighton's favor just after midnight, but because the tournament was double elimination, the two schools had to meet again in a winner-take-all game that *started* at 12:45 a.m., just 20 minutes after the first game ended.

Incredibly, that game was also among the longest in NCAA history. It took 25 innings before Utah won 4-3 to clinch the conference championship and advance to the NCAA tournament. The second game ended at 6:10 a.m., about 12 hours after the first game had begun. Of the 56 innings played over that span, Creighton's Kelly Prokupek pitched 51⅓ of them. She threw 390 pitches.

Which of course brings up other marathon games.

On May 29, 2009, Texas prevailed 3-2 over Boston College in 25 innings, the longest baseball game in NCAA history. Longhorns left-hander Austin Wood entered the game with one out in the seventh inning and went 12 1/3 innings before allowing a hit. He pitched 13 scoreless frames, allowing two hits while striking out 14. Second baseman Travis Tucker's RBI single in the top of the 25th plated the winning run in an NCAA regional playoff game that lasted seven hours and three minutes and featured three future big leaguers on each side, most notably Texas DH Brandon Belt (who went 2-for-8 with three walks).

Exactly one hundred years before that marathon, the Decatur Commodores outlasted the Bloomington Bloomers 2-1 in 26 innings, setting a record for the longest professional game that wouldn't be topped until 1960. That matchup in the Class B Three-I League lasted four hours and 30 minutes -- not including a half-hour rain delay -- and featured 26-inning complete games by Bloomington's **Ed Clark** and Decatur's **Otto Burns** (an outfielder making his professional pitching debut). Shortstop **Marty Burtell** tripled in the game-winning run, the highlight of a season in which he batted just .135. The most famous player in that contest was Bloomers shortstop **George Cutshaw**, who went 1-for-9 en-route to playing six years in the Majors.

Arizona right hander **Zac Gallen** loves pitching at home. Already leading the Majors with a 0.77 home ERA coming into the D-backs' game against the Rockies on Tuesday night, the right-hander spun six scoreless innings in Arizona's 5-1 win. With his fourth spotless outing in six starts at Chase Field this season, Gallen lowered his home ERA to 0.66.

Gallen picked up his National League-leading seventh win in the process, improving to 7-2 with a 2.72 ERA overall this season. His dominance, however, stretches back well beyond the start of this season. Gallen's 2.07 ERA in 27 starts since July 13, 2022, is the lowest in the Majors during that span.

The Friday game I saw at Dodger Stadium was **Lou Gehrig** Day. Gehrig was of course known for 2130 straight games played and ALS and was overshadowed by the larger-than-life presence of **Babe Ruth**. But his offense numbers are impressive.

MVP 2 times

World Series winner 6 times

He hit 493 home runs with 1,995 RBIs.

He still has the highest ratio of runs scored plus runs batted in per 100 plate appearances (35.08) and per 100 games (156.7) among Hall of Fame players.

In 1927, Gehrig put together one of the greatest seasons by any batter in history, hitting .373, with 218 hits: 101 singles, 52 doubles, 18 triples, 47 home runs, a then-record 175 RBIs (surpassing teammate Babe Ruth's 171 six years earlier), a .474 on-base percentage and a .765 slugging percentage. His 117 extra-base hits that season are second all-time to Babe Ruth's 119 extra-base hits in 1921¹ and his 447 total bases are third all-time, after Babe Ruth's 457 total bases in 1921 and **Rogers Hornsby**'s 450 in 1922.

First player to hit 4 HRs in a game (1932)

Won triple crown in 1934, leading the AL with 49 home runs, 166 RBIs, and a .363 batting average.

Led the majors in runs scored 3 times, HRs twice, RBIs 5 times, total bases 3 times.

Joe Sheehan pointed out that for his entire career, Gehrig hit .340/.447/.632. His career OPS+ is behind only Ruth, **Ted Williams**, and **Barry Bonds** among players with at least 5000 plate appearances. His career OBP is fourth in that same pool. Gehrig won two AL MVP awards and has six other top-five finishes, plus three years at the peak of his career in which, by the rules of the day, he was ineligible for the award voting and would have been top five. (Babe Ruth,

similarly limited after winning in 1923, probably wins six more MVP awards, and would have had a case for five in a row starting in 1926.)

His career from age 22 to 35 was short when compared to many Hall of Famers. But he put up some awesome numbers. He is one of two Yankees players to win the MLB Triple Crown (he did so in 1934). **Mickey Mantle** also won the triple crown in 1956.

“SUCCESSION” ENDED WITH AN UNASSISTED TRIPLE PLAY

For fans of the HBO series “Succession” three siblings battle over control of their late father’s media empire. Daughter Shiv’s husband is Tom Wambsgans, an executive in the company. For anyone with extensive knowledge of baseball history, that surname might jump out at you.

Bill Wambsganss was a 13-year infielder in the Majors who spent most of his career playing for Cleveland from 1914-23. He had one claim to fame during his otherwise nondescript career: He is the only player to turn an unassisted triple play during the postseason. It came in Game 5 of the 1920 Fall Classic, in which Cleveland beat the Brooklyn Robins in seven games.

Wambsganss and Cleveland were facing Brooklyn in the 1920 World Series. In the fifth inning of Game 5, with Cleveland leading by 7-0, Brooklyn’s **Pete Kilduff and Otto Miller** both singled. **Clarence Mitchell** then hit a liner that looked as if it could score a run or more.

In a breathless story about the game the next day, which ran on the front page, The New York Times recounted what happened once the ball left Mitchell’s bat. Wambsganss, who had been playing fairly far from second base, “leaped over toward the cushion and with a mighty jump speared the ball with one hand,” the paper reported.

“Wamby’s noodle began to operate faster than it ever did before,” the article continued. “He hopped over to second and touched the bag, retiring Kilduff, who was far down the alley toward third base.”

With two outs already having been recorded on the play, Wambsganss turned his attention to Miller.

“Otto was evidently so surprised that he was just glued to the ground, and Wamby just waltzed over and touched him for the third out,” the paper reported.

The play gave Wambsganss a level of notoriety that eclipsed anything else about his career, or even his life despite his playing six more major league seasons before going on to manage in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

“Funny thing, I played in the big leagues for 13 years, 1914 through 1926, and the only thing that anybody seems to remember is that once I made an unassisted triple play in a World Series,” he said in the 1966 baseball oral history, “The Glory of Their Times.” “Many don’t even remember the team I was on, or the position I played, or anything. Just Wambsganss-unassisted triple play! You’d think I was born on the day before and died on the day after.”

In the final episode of *Succession* Wambsgans pulls off a triple play—out maneuvering the three kids to claim CEO—a triple play.



This Week’s Birthdays

Kirk Gibson	66	
Eric Davis	61	
Charlie Hayes	58	(caught the final out in game 6 of the 1996 World Series)
Kenny Lofton	56	
Manny Ramirez	51	
Raul Ibanez	51	(one of my all-time favorite baseball names)

Dave Roberts	51
Derek Lowe	50

JAYSON STARK AND HIS INTERESTING, WEIRD STATS

Always entertaining in The Athletic—worth a subscription.

Aaron Judge. Through 47 games in 2023 versus that same mountainous masher through 47 games in 2022. It's mind-blowing.

HOME RUNS

2023 — 18

2022 — 18

MULTI-HR GAMES

2023 — 4

2022 — 4

MULTI-HIT GAMES

2023 — 13

2022 — 13

RUNS SCORED

2023 — 41

2022 — 39

RBI's

2023 — 39

2022 — 38

EXTRA-BASE HITS

2023 — 28

2022 — 27

PA/HR

2023 — 11.2

2022 — 11.3

SLASH LINE

2023 — .298/.410/.679/1.088

2022 — .303/.371/.657/1.029

So maybe, with that time he spent on the injured list, Judge won't hit 62 again. But other than that ... wow. Aaron Judge is every bit the monster in 2023 that he was in 2022.

The Marlins' **Luis Arraez** leads the majors in batting again. he started the season by going *24 for his first 47*.

His slash line of .382/.437/.466, with only one home run, as he slashes his way into June. Maybe Line Drive Luis will hit another homer this year. Maybe he won't. But if he doesn't, the last time anybody ran up a slash line like that while hitting only one homer was 125 years ago — **Wee Willie Keeler**, in 1898 (.385/.420/.410)

His only HR came April 11 when he became the first Marlin ever to hit for the cycle.

Here's the select group of qualifying American League/National League hitters in the last 80 years who hit one home run or none ... but still had an OBP of .430 or better:

<u>Player</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>OBP</u>	<u>HR</u>
---------------	-------------	------------	-----------

Richie Ashburn , 1954	.441	1
Johnny Pesky , 1950	.437	1
Harry Walker , 1947	.436	1
Eddie Stanky , 1946	.436	0

Until **Freddie Freeman** (6 INT BB's) passed him this week, Arraez (5) was doing that very thing.

At any rate, it's hard to do — so hard, in fact, that since intentional walks became an official stat in 1955, only one man has led his league in INT BB's while even hitting as few as two home runs. That man: **Garry Templeton** (23 INT BB's), for the 1984 Padres.

And just one other guy has done it without hitting at least five homers: **Wade Boggs** (3 HR, 19 INT BB's), for the 1989 Red Sox.

And if Arraez keeps not scoring at this pace, he'll be way up the leaderboard. To keep it simple, I just projected his final totals at this rate — 207 hits, 53 runs — and then computed Runs Not Scored by subtracting runs from hits. Here we go:

Luis Arraez, 2023*	207	53	154
Ichiro Suzuki , 2004	262	101	151
Kirby Puckett , 1989	215	75	140
Ichiro Suzuki, 2010	214	74	140
Jose Altuve , 2014	225	85	140

(*-projected)

Nobody in history has ever gotten 200 hits in a season without scoring at least 60 runs. And only one player has even done it without scoring at least 70: **George Sisler** (205 hits, 67 runs), for the 1929 Braves.

How many father/son duos have *both* hit .330 or better in the big leagues? For father/son duos with over 200 PA

Terry Francona, 1984 (223 PA) — .346
Tito Francona, 1959 (443 PA) — .363

Bo Bichette of the Blue Jays leads the AL in hits and average. His dad **Dante Bichette** hit .340 (in 1995) and .331 (in 1998) for the Rockies.

Orioles catcher **Adley Rutschman** leads the AL in walks.

Want to guess the last catcher to lead either league in walks? Good luck. It's been a while. It's happened zero times in the last 30 years and just three times since 1908. And the answer isn't **Mike Piazza**, **Johnny Bench** or even **Jason Kendall**. It's (who else) **Mickey Tettleton**, for the 1992 Tigers. So here, for your future barroom trivia sessions, is every catcher who has ever done it in AL/NL history.

Mickey Tettleton 1992 122 Tigers

Darrell Porter 1979 121 Royals

Gene Tenace 1977 125 Padres

Roger Bresnahan 1908 83 Giants

John Clapp 1881 35 Blues

The Atlantic League is where new rules are tested. Enter the “Designated Pinch Runner”. Ninth inning. Designated PR **Justin Twine** pinch runs for **Christian Santana** and comes around to score. ... then returns to his previous life as a regular bench dude ... just not for long ... because exactly two batters later, **Kevin Krause** hits a game-tying single and ... guess who trots out to pinch run again for Krause? Yup, that same Justin Twine. Which made him ...

The first player in professional baseball history to pinch run *twice in the same inning ... for two different batters*.

May 23 Blue Jays beat Rays 20-1. In 2 hours and 31 minutes. there has been only one shorter game in the entire expansion era (1961-now) in which a team scored at least 20 runs?

That was Yankees 21, Kansas City A's 7, on Aug. 17, 1962. That one took 2:27. **Mickey Mantle's** line that day: 3-for-4, homer, double, 7 RBIs, 2 SB ... and he left three innings early!

Just days after the Blue Jays bombed the Rays Tampa beat the Dodgers 11-10. The Rays' starting pitcher, **Josh Fleming**, had one of those days that make baseball the mysteriously addictive sport it is. He gave up 12 hits, 10 runs and five homers, had to chew up six innings to save the bullpen ... *and his team won!*

According to Baseball Reference/Stathead, only one other pitcher in the modern era ever got knocked around for that many runs, hits and homers in a game his team won. And that was the legendary **Ralph Branca**, for Brooklyn, who went *all nine innings* to win an attractive 17-10 game in Pittsburgh on June 25, 1949.

The only hitter to go 5 for 5 in any game in May was **Bo Bichette**. Unfortunately, it was on May 1 ... which means the Cinco de Mayo Streak continues!

We've now gone 21 consecutive years since **Omar Vizquel** unfurled the last 5-for-5 game on Cinco de Mayo. The best we could do this year: Angels pitcher **Tyler Anderson's** Cinco de Mayo pitching line: 5 innings, 5 hits, 5 walks. *No bueno!*

Royals 7, Cardinals 0 (Monday). So what's up with that? It was the Royals' largest shutout win over the Cardinals since ... yep, that one ... 11-0 in Game 7 of the 1985 World Series.

Reds 5, Red Sox 4 (Wednesday). So what's up with that? According to friend of the program Joel Luckhaupt, brilliant Reds statistical mastermind, it was the Reds' fifth comeback win in history against the Red Sox. Except the other four were ... *all four Reds wins in the 1975 World Series.*

CHICAGO FIRE — I feel like **Michael Kopech**'s two-start blitz of sheer unhittability for the White Sox went whooshing by us way too fast. So hold on one minute. This was amazing.

May 19 — eight innings, one hit, no runs, 10 strikeouts against the Royals.

May 24 — seven innings, two hits, no runs, nine whiffs against the Guardians.

So what's up with that? Only four pitchers in the history of the American League have ever spun off back-to-back scoreless starts of seven innings or more, two hits allowed or one, and nine strikeouts or more. Maybe you've heard of them:

Pedro Martinez (2002)

Randy Johnson (1997)

Nolan Ryan (twice, in 1976 and '78)

Cy Young (1905).

There are slumps ... and then there's **Trayce Thompson** ... who went an incredible *40 days between hits* (and also 0 for 39) for the Dodgers until this week. And then ...

Went 3 for 3 Sunday against the Rays, with a walk and a homer.

OK, got all that? From 39 straight at-bats without a hit to four trips in one game *without making an out*? You don't see that a whole lot!

Baseball Reference's brilliant Kenny Jackelen dug into every game in the Baseball Reference database, which is complete for the last 50 years, mostly complete back to 1950 and has thousands of other games back to 1914. He found just three other players who went through an 0-for-39 funk (or worse) and ended it with a three-hit game (or better).

There was the Orioles' **Chris Davis**, who stopped his infamous 0-for-54 death spiral in 2019 with a 3-for-5 day. ... There was Marlins outfielder **Justin Ruggiano**, who interrupted an 0-for-42 skid in 2013 with a 3-for-4 game. But ...

There was only one other player in all those years who ended his slump the way Thompson ended his — with three hits *but no outs*. And that man was ... *a pitcher* — the Cubs' **Matt Clement** ... who went *10 months without a hit* and then wiped out a messy little 0-for-44 with ... *the only 3-for-3 game of his career*.

There was Mariners rookie **José Caballero**, on May 21 in Atlanta: 1 for 1, with a home run, a hit-by-pitch and three stolen bases.

So what's up with that? Mariners media relations whiz Alex Mayer reports that Caballero just became the first player to cram a homer, an HBP and three stolen bases into the same box score, while reaching base in all his plate appearances, since ... **Ty Cobb**, on July 4, 1912! Oh, and where did Caballero do all this? In a game played in ... Cobb County!

Last Saturday in Minnesota, a funny thing happened. The then-last-place Blue Jays played a game against the first-place Twins. But that, obviously, was not the Strange But True part.

The Strange But True part was ... the team in last place had a better record (27-25) than the team in first place (26-25). Is that Strange But True enough for you?

Last time that happened this late in the season in any league: Aug. 11, 2005: First-place Padres (57-56) play last-place Mets (58-55) in San Diego ... and win, 2-1, with Woody Williams outdueling Tom Glavine ... in a game that includes a pinch triple by Padres backup catcher **David Ross**.

On May 26 the Giants scored 15 runs in a game that their first two batters went 0-13. that's four more runs than any team has scored since 1901 when its first two hitters went 0 for 12 or worse. The previous "record" was set by **Jimmy Rollins' and Placido Polanco's** 2004 Phillies, who scored 11 runs in an extra-inning game against the Mets on Sept. 11, even though Rollins and Polanco went 0 for 13.

But the record for a nine-inning game? That was only 10 runs, by the 1942 Brooklyn Dodgers, in an April 26 game in Philadelphia in which **Pee Wee Reese and Sweet Lew Riggs** went 0 for 12.

May 18 — Cardinals hit seven home runs against the Dodgers.

May 19 — Cardinals get shut out by the Dodgers.

May 26 — Pirates hit seven home runs in Seattle.

May 27 — Pirates get shut out in Seattle!

LONGER READS

BIG CHANGES IN HOW WE WATCH GAMES

Bally Sports abruptly ceased broadcasting Padres games this week. After a court skirmish MLB took over broadcasting.

A judge ruled in favor of MLB and the four teams (Guardians, Twins, Diamondbacks and Rangers) that have not been paid their full fee from Diamond Sports Group (the parent company of Bally Sports). The ruling: The “changing market conditions” Diamond cited were not sufficient cause to justify non-payment, and the company was ordered to pay the full amount owed to the teams.

DSG now has a choice to make: keep the contracts or reject them as it did with the Padres.

If Diamond should give up their broadcasting rights for any or all of those teams, however, fans shouldn’t worry about not being able to watch the games, per this league statement: “As with the Padres, MLB will stand ready to make games available to fans if Diamond fails to meet its obligations.”

Commissioner Rob Manfred said the Padres and any other team that wasn’t getting the payments they had budgeted for would be covered — well, at least 80 percent covered — out of the league’s coffers.

It became pretty clear that Diamond’s relationship with MLB is, uh, strained. Manfred testified that he met with David Smith, chairman of Sinclair Broadcast Group, who outlined the steps he planned to take to pressure MLB teams into relinquishing their direct-to-consumer broadcast rights. One MLB lawyer described Smith’s tactics as “blackmail.”

Diamond CEO David Preschlak said that Bally had roughly 203,000 subscribers — about 55 percent of their projected goal — to its direct-to-consumer app, which launched last June. “And despite this budget miss in the first quarter, you’re still projecting over 850,000 subscribers by the end of the year?” MLB outside counsel Ben Walker asked, pointing out that would be more than four times the number of subscribers the service had in April. Preschlack answered

affirmatively, as Daniel Kaplan writes here, though he used a figure of 802,000, and confirmed Diamond believes it will have 10 million subscribers by 2028.

Joe Sheehan's take- This is the latest skirmish in a war whose roots date to Disney's purchase of 21st Century Fox more than five years ago. As part of that sale, Disney was ordered by the U.S. Department of Justice to sell off Fox's regional sports networks (alternately reported as 21 or 22) to avoid antitrust violations. Disney sold the networks to the Sinclair Broadcast Group for \$9.6 billion, heavily debt financed, in 2019. The networks included the broadcast outlets of 14 MLB teams, including the Padres. At the time of purchase, Sinclair joined with Entertainment Studios to form Diamond Sports Group.

Sinclair was bullish on the transaction. From *Variety's* report:

Sinclair is adding to its considerable debt load in taking on the RSNs. But given the circumstances that Disney faced, Sinclair likely calculated that it was a chance to grab the channels at a bargain price.

"This acquisition is an extraordinary opportunity to diversify Sinclair's content sources and revenue streams with high-quality assets that are driving live viewing," [President and CEO Chris] Ripley said. "We also see this as an opportunity to realize cross-promotional collaboration, and synergistic benefits related to programming and production."

Things went south quickly. As with so many private equity deals made in the last decade, loading up the new venture with debt made its bottom line look awful. The decline in cable and satellite subscribers accelerated, with pay TV losing about 23% of its subscriber base from 2019 to 2022 -- dropping from an estimated 84 million households to 65 million. A business model predicated on collecting monthly subscriber fees from people who had cable and satellite service, whether they watched the RSN or not, was collapsing quicker than anticipated. In March, Diamond Sports declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy in an effort to get out from under \$8 billion in debt.

This is when it got real for baseball. Piecing together information on the 14 teams whose local broadcast rights are owned by DSG, I estimate that the company is obligated to cut checks of about \$900 million a year to baseball teams, most of them in average- and below-average-sized baseball markets. Even for a business the size of baseball's, that's a big number, maybe 8% of overall revenue in a given year. A team that draws poorly but does well on TV, like the Rays, might have 20-25% of its expected revenue, before revenue sharing payouts, under threat.

After some consternation and delays, DSG made its scheduled payments to all 14 teams before the season. MLB, nevertheless, began hiring for the possibility it would have to take over the broadcasts for these teams at some point, laying in contingencies. DSG turned to a strategy of leveraging that \$900 million a year to save its dying business, demanding that MLB grant them in-market streaming rights in exchange for their continued partnership. When MLB wouldn't cave to what was pretty much a blackmail play, DSG shot a hostage.

From the great John Ourand at *Sports Business Journal*:

In a statement emailed to SBJ, Diamond confirmed that it would not make a payment and no longer would produce or carry Padres games after tonight. "While DSG has significant liquidity and have been making rights payments to teams, the economics of the Padres' contract were not aligned with market realities. MLB has forced our hand by its continued refusal to negotiate direct-to-consumer (DTC) streaming rights for all teams in our portfolio despite our proposal to pay every team in full in exchange for those rights. We are continuing to broadcast games for teams under our contracts."

It's possible I don't know what the word "contract" means. I am certain DSG doesn't.

This brings us to today. DSG decided to stop paying the Padres and forfeit Bally Sports San Diego's broadcast rights. They'll save \$60 million a year and probably end the network. MLB handled this correctly. They were proactive in the winter when the possibility of a DSG breach came on to their radar. They didn't cave to DSG's attempt to leverage payments to all DSG teams in exchange for the local streaming rights to the nine teams whose rights it doesn't already own. MLB's long-term play here -- which isn't going to be easy to pull off -- is a 30-team direct-to-consumer in-market product, and they weren't going to grant those incredibly valuable rights to a potential competitor under duress.

So tonight, MLB will produce the broadcast of the Padres' game in Miami, using the same broadcasters that were previously working for Bally Sports San Diego. It has worked out deals with a number of cable and satellite providers to make the game, and future games, available in San Diego to subscribers who were paying for BSSD. MLB's first priority seems to be protecting the customers who were cable and satellite subscribers, still their largest block of viewers and ones that have shelled out money to watch the Padres. It's good customer service.

The interesting part is the streaming side. Many fans have been clamoring for an end to local blackouts of their favorite team. As I have written many times, this complaint shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the business model. The RSNs are paying for the exclusive rights to televise the baseball games on their network. MLB teams can't also sell those rights directly to people who don't want to pay for the network. That would be a violation of the first set of contracts, the ones that pay teams \$30 million to \$150 million a year. If I sell you a car, I can't sell someone else that exact same car.

In San Diego, though, there is no longer an exclusive rights holder. DSG gave up its rights. MLB can legally provide Padres games in the San Diego market for free, whether standalone or simply by lifting the blackout of Padres games for anyone with MLB.tv.

They have instead created direct-to-consumer options for the Padres priced at \$75 for the rest of the season and \$20/month. These provide access to all Padres games outside of Fox or ESPN games. There does not seem to be an option for MLB.tv subscribers in San Diego to get Padres games for the money they're already paying. There's still a local blackout for mainline MLB.tv subscribers, but it's not protecting anyone. A rule that made sense last week no longer does.

MLB is thinking long term, using the Padres as the canary in a coal mine for what will surely be coming next, as DSG is certain to keep sloughing off local broadcast rights. This is a chance to test the demand for a local DTC product in what should be a good market for baseball, to get a sense of what revenues might look like in a DTC future.

Let's not minimize the adjustment here. DSG was paying \$60 million a year to broadcast Padres games, and MLB is not going to make that up by charging fans \$75 at a time. (The full-season single-team price for out-of-market games is \$120/year, barely less than the \$140/year you can pay for all teams' out-of-market games on MLB.tv. YES Network, which televises the Yankees, has a DTC product for \$25/month or \$240/year. These give you an idea of what fans will have to pay for local games in a DTC world.)

The transition here isn't just about television, but also about the in-park experience and the product on the field and revenue sharing and battles with labor. If the RSN model is coming to an end, baseball teams, for the first time in a long time, will have to eat what they kill. A pillar of their business model that was largely immune to team performance is going away. They'll need to get people excited about the ballclub, excited enough to spend \$150/year to watch the games and excited enough to buy more tickets. Many teams will ask for more assistance from those unaffected by this change; the revenue-sharing formula itself, which is predicated on everyone's local revenue, will increase the amount teams like the Dodgers, Yankees, and Cubs are asked to transfer to others. Come 2027, the owners will no doubt come to the players demanding concessions -- read: help us stop competing with each other -- in the wake of these changes to the business model.

That Disney/Fox deal in 2017 accelerated a process that was already underway. The pandemic, which was a boon for streaming services, further pushed things along. I thought the RSN model would last into the 2030s, but starting today in Miami, it's the beginning of what comes next.

Local cable and satellite providers will still air games on a new channel, or—and this is the interesting part—fans can subscribe to a new Padres-only MLB.TV package to watch games without local blackout restrictions. (The streaming package will cost \$19.99 per month or \$74.99 for the rest of the season.) The broadcast team of Don Orsillo, Mark Grant and Bob Scanlan will remain unchanged.

So why should people outside San Diego care about where Padres games will be aired? Because this is likely just the first domino to fall in a colossal shakeup of how fans watch their teams and how teams earn money. Diamond Sports Group owns regional sports networks under the Bally Sports brand that broadcast games for 42 MLB, NBA and NHL teams. It filed for bankruptcy in

March and has also stopped making its rights payments to the Rangers, Guardians, Twins and Diamondbacks. The Padres are the first team to nullify their contract with DSG, but they won't be the last.

The direct-to-consumer approach is great for Padres fans, who now have more flexibility to watch their team without having to subscribe to cable, but it could be troublesome for the franchise. The team's 20-year, \$1.2 billion TV contract wasn't set to expire until 2032. It paid the team \$60 million per year, which the Padres now have to try to cobble together one \$19.99 monthly payment at a time. That's a tricky spot for a small-market team with baseball's third-highest payroll to be in. One source told *The Athletic's* Daniel Kaplan that they believed MLB would try to launch a new regional sports network to replace Bally but that it might be expected to earn only half as much as what the previous deal paid.

Rights fees from broadcasters have been sports teams' primary source of revenue for decades now, but as consumers have gravitated toward streaming and away from bundled cable, that structure has been on increasingly thinner ice. The Padres situation represents the first test of a system under threat.

AARON BOONE'S RATE OF EJECTION IS HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

Tom Verducci, Sports Illustrated

Yankees manager **Aaron Boone** was called on the carpet by MLB last week for getting thrown out of games at a ridiculous pace exceeded by only one manager in history, a guy known as "Ol' Rant and Rave." So how did the new "Ol' Rant and Rave" respond?

"No, I'm not going to change," Boone said.

It was a misguided response to behavior that is hard to fathom in an age of replay review, which essentially removes every safe-out call on the bases from sensible argument. Well, since then Boone has made it through a whole week without throwing one of his patented tantrums—the levelheadedness caused him to slip into third place on the ejection frequency list—so maybe there is a real change of behavior that he just doesn't want to admit.

Challenging umpires' ball-and-strike calls and backing your players comes with the job of managing—even though the manager has a terrible view from the dugout of the width of the plate. Trying to fire up your team with an outburst is an old (if feeble) trick. Fine. But six years into the job, Boone's behavior is getting unnecessarily worse.

MLB suspended Boone for one game and fined him not just for the latest incident, but also because of his overall and persistent behavior toward umpires. Part of that behavior, an MLB source said, was continuing to pursue an umpire after the umpire attempted to de-escalate the situation by walking away, as they are trained to do. Boone was told in so many words, “Tone it down.”

MLB gave the same advice to Reds manager **David Bell** when Bell was ejected eight times as a rookie manager in 2019. Bell got the message. He has been ejected 15 times in four seasons since, but that still leaves him with a career ejection rate of once every 26.2 games, not too dissimilar to Boone’s rate of early showers (25.5) and that of Bell’s father, **Buddy Bell** (29.6).

How foolish does Boone look by getting thrown out so often? Boone has been ejected more times in his six years (30) than **Dusty Baker** has in his 26 years managing (25). He has been ejected more in the past 1½ seasons (13) than **Dave Roberts** has in his nine seasons (10). His place on this list says it all:

MLB Highest Manager Ejection Rate (min. 750 games managed)

Manager	Games Per Ejection
Paul Richards	22.4
Frankie Frisch	25.52
Aaron Boone	25.53
Earl Weaver	26.5
Roger Bresnahan	26.7
Bobby Cox	27.8
Larry Bowa	29.4
Ron Gardenhire	29.5
Buddy Bell	29.6
John Gibbons	29.8

Boone gets thrown out more often than anybody in the past 62 years. It is crazy that Boone is getting thrown out more often than Weaver did. The Earl of Baltimore feuded so often with umpires he was thrown out of both games of a doubleheader—three times. He was the first manager thrown out of a World Series game. His feud with umpire **Ron Luciano** was so legendary the AL stopped scheduling Luciano to work Orioles games. When an umpire once

offered to show Weaver his rule book to explain a call, Weaver shot back, “That’s no good. I can’t read Braille.”

And yet Boone—without the need to argue any call on the bases—gets thrown out more often than Weaver.

Number one of the list, Paul “Ol’ Rant and Rave” Richards, managed the White Sox and Orioles primarily in the 1950s. He was a baseball innovator who designed the oversize catcher’s mitt for catching knuckleballs, was the first manager to deploy pitch counts to protect young arms, was a mentor to **Tony La Russa** and helped shape “The Oriole Way” of playing fundamental baseball. He also was known to have the foulest mouth in baseball; the same guy who taught Sunday school in off seasons. He led the AL in ejections for a record 11 straight seasons.

Richards, who was tossed for the last time in 1961, and Frankie Frisch, who was given the thumb a final time in ’51, are the only managers to get thrown out more frequently than Boone. Frisch at least was as creative as he was irascible. He was thrown out of one game for carrying an umbrella onto the field to protest weather conditions and another time for pretending to faint in disbelief over a call.

For more context, Boone gets thrown out twice as often as base-throwing, cap-kicking **Lou Piniella** did. One time after one of his classic temper tantrums in Cleveland, Piniella scolded the bat boy for picking up his cap before he could kick it again. “Never,” he ordered the kid, “mess with one of my props.”

Some of the angriest managers in history—and Boone’s own father—don’t come close to Boone’s rate of ejections:

Selected Other Manager Ejection Rates

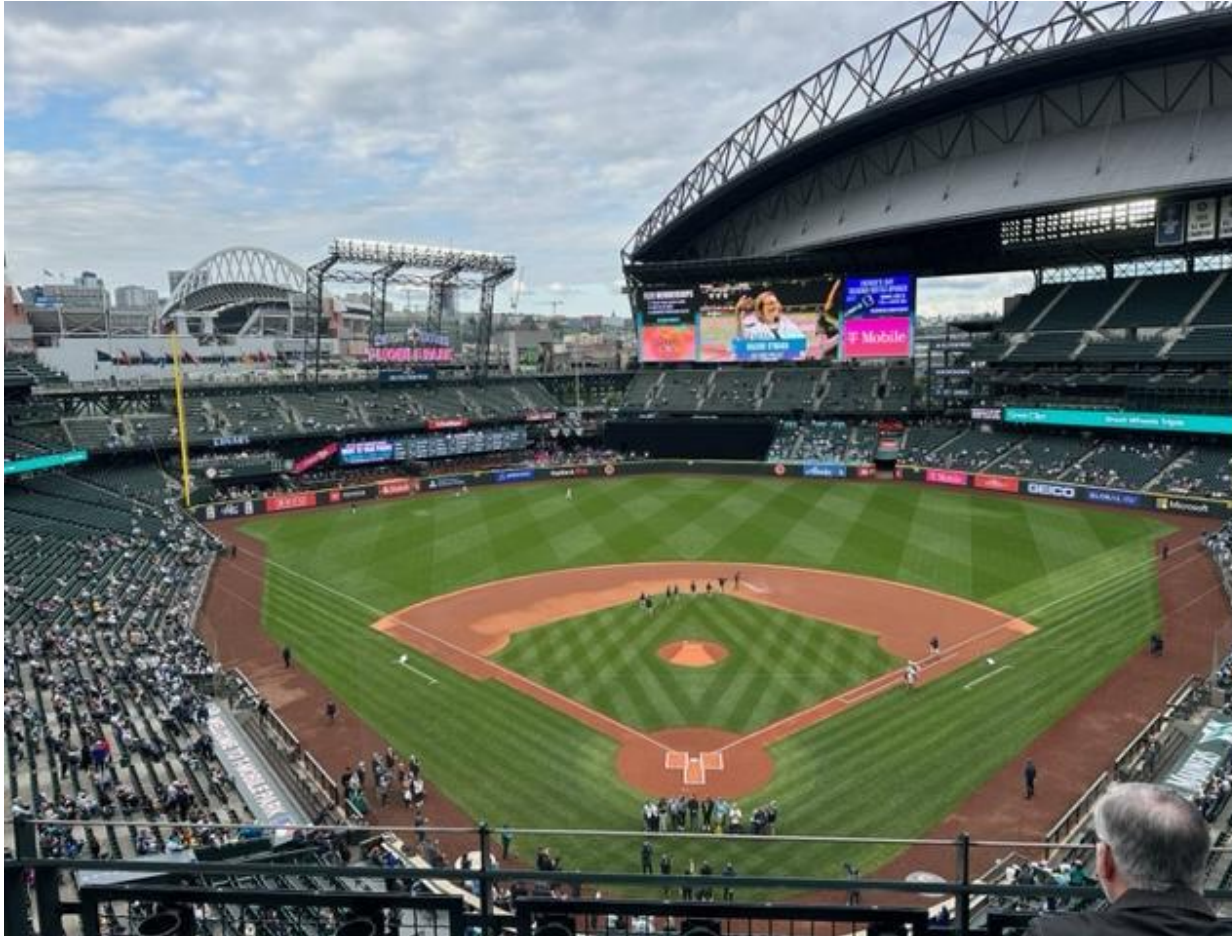
Manager	Games Per Ejection
Leo Durocher	37.4
Billy Martin	47.2
Jim Leyland	47.9
Bobby Valentine	53.4
Lou Piniella	55.4
Tony La Russa	57.9
Bob Boone	101.9
Connie Mack	7,755

The Mack rate deserves an explanation. In 1895, his first full season as manager, Mack's Pirates team was playing the Giants at the Polo Grounds when there was a close play at second involving a New York runner. Back then, there was only one umpire. In this case it was **Hank O'Day**, a former pitcher who was a batterymate of Mack's with Washington from '87 to '89 and who was umpiring his first season. O'Day had to sprint from behind the plate to make the call at second. When he shouted, "Safe!" Mack charged at O'Day and unleashed a string of profanities that carried all the way to the press box. O'Day ejected Mack. Uniformed patrol officers had to be summoned to escort Mack off the field.

Mack managed another 51 years and was never ejected from another game. Unlike Boone, The Tall Tactician made a clear decision to change his ways.

PETE'S GREAT ADVENTURE—REPORT FROM SEATTLE AND LOS ANGELES





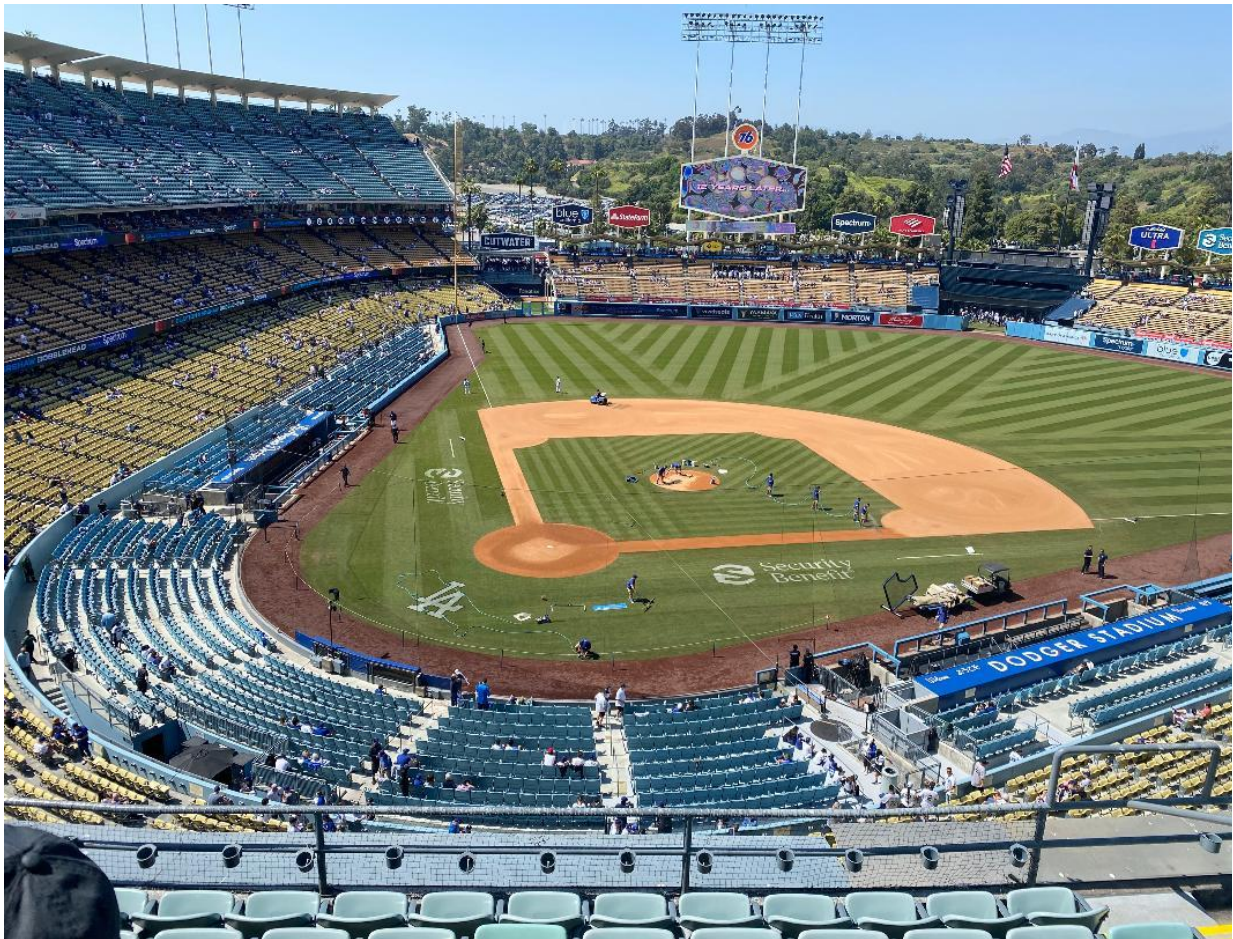
Yankees lost 1-0 in 10 innings in Seattle. Subscriber and long-time friend Jeff has season tickets. I liked T-Mobile Stadium. The roof was open, his seats are great and we saw a good pitchers duel with **George Kirby** and **Clarke Schmidt** putting up a lot of zeros. Yankees had their chances but Mariners walked it off.

Dodger Stadium included two more subscribers. Craig has been a friend since third grade in Westfield, NJ. Chris was a couple of classes ahead of me at Wesleyan and a terrific centerfielder.

Dodger Stadium is the third oldest park in the majors after Fenway and Wrigley. It feels small with tight concourses. You enter at the top and descend into the bowl. Seemed like a third of the crowd were Yankees fans.

Friday night Dodgers scored 6 in the first inning-**Mookie Betts** had a night with 2 HRs, 2 more hits, a walk, a stolen base, 2 runs scored and 3 RBIs.

Saturday **Gerrit Cole** looked great for 6 innings but left with cramps. Four Yankee homers (**Jake Bauers** hit 2, **Oswaldo Cabrera** and **Aaron Judge** all went deep) and after some shaky bullpen work Yankees won 6-3.





Some more Dodger Stadium observations--\$16 for a Bud Light (\$18 if you want it in a Dodgers commemorative plastic cup. My Dodger dog and a bottled water came to \$15.50. Huge number of Spanish accents. As with most of L.A., traffic in and out of the place was brutal.

WHAT IF MONEYBALL HAPPENED IN 2022

Ian Yale in the Drummy Angle

In the winter of 2001, the Oakland Athletics lost three of their biggest stars in 1B **Jason Giambi**, OF **Johnny Damon**, and closer **Jason Isringhausen**. Giambi, coming off back-to-back dominant seasons that saw him win the AL MVP in 2000 and place second in 2001, signed a massive deal with the New York Yankees that paid him \$120 million over 7 years. Damon was a similar story, inking a 4 year, \$31 million deal with the Boston Red Sox. Isringhausen followed suit and signed with the St. Louis Cardinals for \$27 million over 4 years shortly after. This was a disaster for Oakland, and GM Billy Beane had to get creative to rebuild his roster.

The 2011 film “Moneyball,” starring Brad Pitt and Jonah Hill, does a good job of telling the story of the 2002 Oakland A’s, but there are some key omissions in the movie. First off, Oakland had a trio of young starting pitchers to spearhead their rotation, including **Tim Hudson**, **Mark Mulder**, and 2002 AL Cy Young Award winner **Barry Zito**. With ERA+ of 145, 125, and 158 respectively, the big three contributed enormously to the Athletics’ 103-win season in 2002 but were not mentioned in the film.

Another player missing from the film is SS **Miguel Tejada**, the 2002 AL MVP. Tejada and his partner on the left side of the infield, 3B **Eric Chavez**, provided Oakland with respective OPS+ of 128 and 127 while each slugging 34 home runs and playing elite defense. The duo combined for 10 WAR but were nowhere to be found in the script.

Omissions aside, Moneyball stresses the importance of analytics in building a successful baseball team. Beane used the simple On-Base Percentage statistic to find players to recreate the losses of Giambi and Damon for a fraction of the cost. In 2023, there are many more stats to use that did not exist two decades ago, and I will make use of these metrics, like fWAR, WRC+, and OPS+, to assemble a 2022 Moneyball dream team.

RULES:

- 1- The 2002 Oakland A’s payroll was \$39.7 million. Adjusted for inflation, that is equal to roughly \$67 million today. I will keep the total payroll of this team under that number.
- 2- All WAR numbers will be fWAR to keep everything consistent. Percentile stats will come from Baseball Savant.

3- OBP will be considered, but, due to the evolution of the game over the past two decades, it will not be the sole deciding factor as it was in 2002.

4- Player salaries will only account for 2022. For example, if a player making \$1 million signed an extension that will pay them \$10 million per year, but that pay raise does not kick in until 2023, then that player's salary will be marked as \$1 million. All salary data comes from Spotrac.com

Catcher- **Alejandro Kirk**, Toronto Blue Jays

2022 Salary- \$714,000

One of 2022's biggest breakout stars, Alejandro Kirk finished the year with an absurd .372 on-base percentage in 541 plate appearances. Two of the biggest factors in Kirk's season at the plate were an 88th percentile walk percentage and a strikeout percentage in the 98th percentile, contributing to a 3.8 fWAR. Kirk, who started the All-Star Game and won the AL Silver Slugger behind the plate, will bring top-tier framing and defense and an elite eye at the plate to this roster.

First Base- **Christian Walker**, Arizona Diamondbacks

2022 Salary- \$2,600,000

With 36 home runs in 2022, Christian Walker brings a ton of power to this squad, but that is not his only talent. Walker is elite in the field, ranking in the top one percent of first basemen in Outs Above Average. With an fWAR of 4.1 in 2022, Walker has earned his spot on this team.

Second Base- **Andres Gimenez**, Cleveland Guardians

2022 Salary- \$706,600

Gimenez, the key piece the Guardians acquired in return for SS Francisco Lindor, broke out in a huge way in 2022. With an OBP of .371 and a WRC+ of 140, Gimenez proved to be a great leadoff hitter for Cleveland. However, his value lies mostly in his defense and speed. He boasts 94th percentile speed and was in the top 2 percent of second basemen in terms of OAA. Overall, Gimenez's vast skillset, which led to 6.1 fWAR, makes him a perfect fit for this team.

Third Base- **Yandy Diaz**, Tampa Bay Rays

2022 Salary- \$2,800,000

The Tampa Bay Rays have a magic touch when it comes to finding undervalued players, and they struck gold with Diaz. Hitting leadoff for Tampa, Diaz finished 2022 with a WRC+ of 146 and an absurd OBP of .401, the only qualified infielder to eclipse .400. Yandy's Baseball Savant page is littered with stats in the 95th percentile and higher, including average and max exit velocities, strikeout and walk percentages, and chase rate. Diaz is an elite hitter and makes the cut easily as my third baseman.

Shortstop- **Tommy Edman**, St. Louis Cardinals

2022 Salary- \$722,900

Manning shortstop will be Cardinals' utilityman Tommy Edman. Edman is a defensive wizard in both the infield and the outfield, posting an OAA in the 100th percentile in 2022. This elite defense, paired with a crafty, switch-hitting approach at the plate, landed Edman at a 5.7 fWAR for the year. He completes the infield and likely hits leadoff on this team.

Left Field- **Daulton Varsho**, Toronto Blue Jays

2022 Salary- \$721,700

Daulton Varsho is one of the most unique players in baseball, with the ability and athleticism to play elite defense as both an outfielder and a catcher. Varsho ranked eighth among outfielders in fWAR in 2022 with 4.7, and that elite defense is a huge reason why. Varsho also realized some of his power potential in 2022, hitting 27 home runs for a Diamondbacks offense that needed it badly. Although his OBP and WRC+ are a little lower than most players on this team, Varsho's defensive value makes him a quality addition to the outfield.

Center Field- **Adolis Garcia**, Texas Rangers

2022 Salary- \$714,000

Garcia, similar to Varsho, did not have the most spectacular on-base numbers, but he also established himself as an elite power-speed-defense weapon for the Rangers in 2022. Garcia's Baseball Savant page tells that story well, crediting him with 92nd percentile average exit velocity, 86th percentile hard-hit percentage, 65th percentile sprint speed (83rd in 2021), 67th percentile OAA, and 98th percentile arm strength. Garcia is nearly a five-tool player and will slot in nicely in center field.

Right Field- **Kyle Tucker**, Houston Astros

2022 Salary- \$764,200

Since taking over in Houston's outfield for the departed George Springer, Kyle Tucker has been one of the most underrated stars in baseball. Tucker accumulated a 4.8 fWAR in 2022, placing him seventh among outfielders. He also boasts a Savant page that would make any hitter envious. Tucker's plate discipline sets him apart from the pack, as he was in the 78th percentile in whiff percentage and the 67th percentile in chase rate. With a .330 OBP, 30 home runs, and 25 stolen bases in 2022, along with an 89th percentile OAA, Tucker is one of the most well-rounded players in baseball.

Designated Hitter- **Yordan Alvarez**, Houston Astros

2022 Salary- \$764,600

Alvarez, one of the best pure hitters in baseball, showed out for Houston in 2022. He accumulated a monstrous 6.7 fWAR from the DH position, leading all primary DHs and besting second place by 2.5 fWAR. Yordan's Savant page shows he ranks in the 94th percentile or better in nearly every major hitting metric, which should not surprise anyone who watched him hit in the 2022 postseason. Alvarez signed a 6-year extension for \$115,000,000 in June 2022, but he was an easy selection at his 2022 salary.

Bench-

Cedric Mullins, Baltimore Orioles

2022 Salary- \$716,500

Steven Kwan, Cleveland Guardians

2022 Salary- \$700,000

Taylor Ward, Los Angeles Angels

2022 Salary- \$720,000

Will Smith, Los Angeles Dodgers

2022 Salary- \$730,000

Total Hitter Payroll- \$13,374,500

Pitching was not a problem at all for the 2002 A's, so there was not as big of an emphasis on pitching analytics in the movie. That being said, to truly create a "Moneyball" team, I have to include a full pitching staff. The two metrics I use most frequently to evaluate a pitching season are ERA+ and SIERA. ERA+ is just like OPS+ for hitters. It simply takes a pitcher's ERA and turns it into a number that is easier to understand by adjusting for the run environment and era in which a pitcher played. For example, **Pedro Martinez**'s prime seasons were in the middle of the steroid era, which was an absurdly high run environment. Despite the surge in offense in the late 1990s-early 2000s, Pedro was able to put together 2 of the greatest pitching seasons of all time, leading to a 291 ERA+. If you compare Martinez's best seasons to the best years of **Christy Mathewson**, who pitched in the "dead-ball era," the surface stats may look very similar. However, Mathewson's ERA+ from those prime years is much lower than Martinez's. SIERA is also very simple. It is just ERA, but only takes into account what the pitcher can control by himself.

Starting Rotation:

Dylan Cease, Chicago White Sox

2022 Salary: \$750,000

ERA+: 180

SIERA: 3.48

Alek Manoah, Toronto Blue Jays

2022 Salary: \$730,000

ERA+: 168

SIERA: 3.85

Zac Gallen, Arizona Diamondbacks

2022 Salary: \$745,600

ERA+: 158

SIERA: 3.32

Kyle Wright, Atlanta Braves

2022 Salary: \$720,000

ERA+: 130

SIERA: 3.48

Shane McClanahan, Tampa Bay Rays

2022 Salary: \$711,400

ERA+: 142

SIERA: 2.82

Bullpen:

Evan Phillips, Los Angeles Dodgers

2022 Salary: \$720,000

ERA+: 360

SIERA: 2.34

John Schreiber, Boston Red Sox

2022 Salary: \$700,000

ERA+: 192

SIERA: 2.71

Erik Swanson, Seattle Mariners

2022 Salary: \$711,600

ERA+: 224

SIERA: 2.15

Pete Fairbanks, Tampa Bay Rays

2022 Salary: \$714,400

ERA+: 327

SIERA: 1.09

Trevor Stephan, Cleveland Guardians

2022 Salary: \$703,400

ERA+: 141

SIERA: 2.55

Caleb Thielbar, Minnesota Twins

2022 Salary: \$1,300,000

ERA+: 112

SIERA: 2.59

Alex Vesia, Los Angeles Dodgers

2022 Salary: \$720,000

ERA+: 191

SIERA: 2.68

Joe Mantiplay, Arizona Diamondbacks

2022 Salary: \$717,000

ERA+: 142

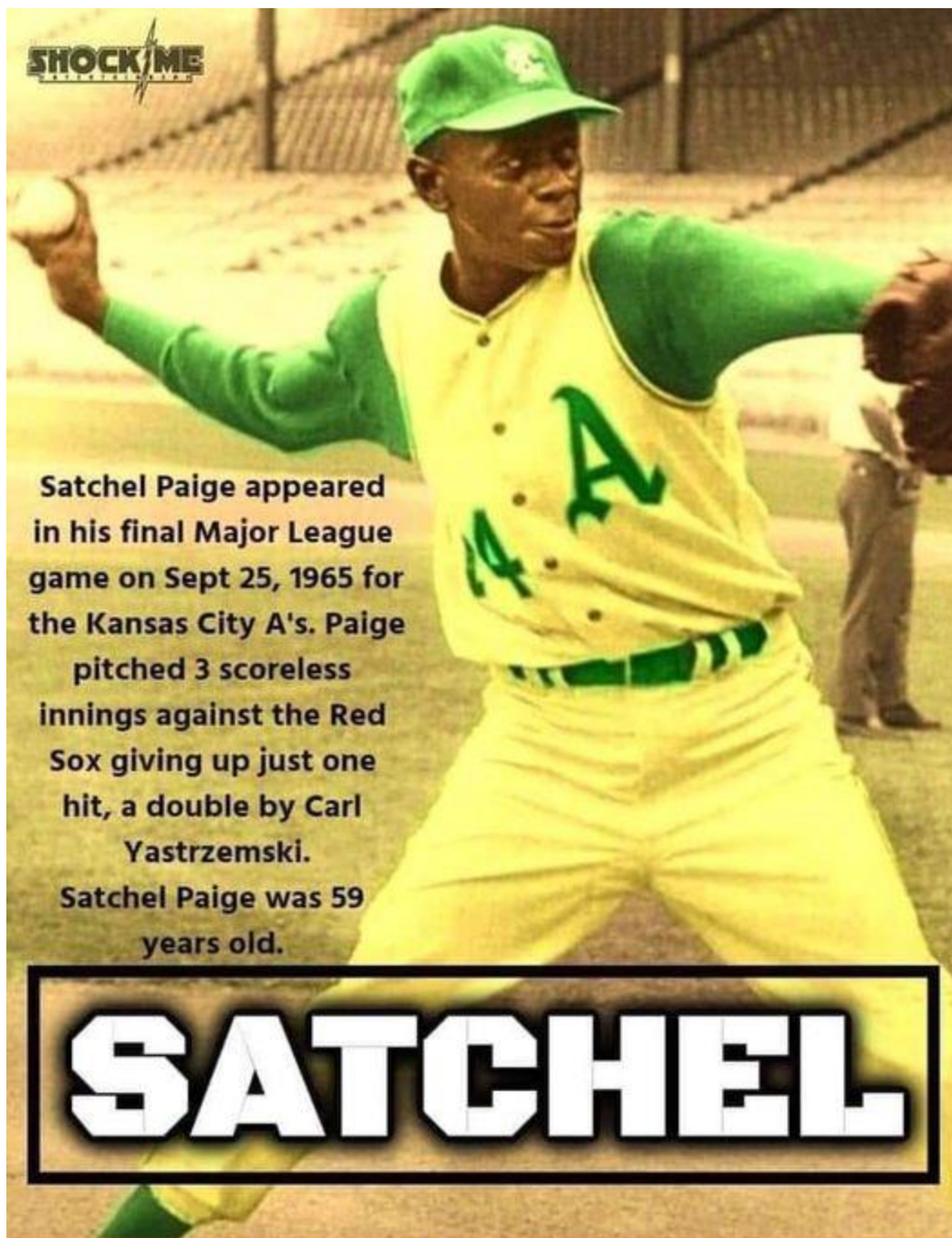
SIERA: 2.40

Total Pitching Payroll- \$9,943,400

Total Payroll- \$23,317,900

Patrick Corbin's 2022 Salary- \$23,416,666

All of these players provided All-Star caliber performances to their teams for a fraction of the salaries elite players usually command. While most of these guys will repeat their incredible performances from last season, it will be interesting to see which players just showed a flash in the pan and which players are truly among the game's best. Some players on this team will soon reap the benefits of their stardom by inking valuable long-term extensions. Others may choose to wait it out in hopes of cashing in on a big free-agent payday. Regardless, the decisions made by the members of this Moneyball Dream Team will shape the future of the league.



Satchel Paige appeared in his final Major League game on Sept 25, 1965 for the Kansas City A's. Paige pitched 3 scoreless innings against the Red Sox giving up just one hit, a double by Carl Yastrzemski. Satchel Paige was 59 years old.

SATCHEL

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE ANSWERS

Four players have won multiple MVP awards at different positions.

1935 AL MVP as 1B, 1940 AL MVP as outfielder. Played in 1934, 35, 40 and 45 World Series for Detroit. HOF.

Hank Greenberg

1944 and 46 MVP as outfielder, 1948 as 1B. Played whole career with one NL team. Batted and throws lefty. HOF.

Stan Musial

MVP 2003, 2005, 2007. Played SS, 3B and DH. 3115 hits and 5th all-time in HRs with 696.

ARod

1982 MVP as infielder, 1989 as outfielder. HOF. Hit .414 in 1982 World Series.

Robin Yount

I am in the Hall of Fame

Lefty pitcher

I went 283-237 with a 3.45 ERA

I played 25 seasons, 20 in the AL.

I led the majors in games started in 1965 and 1966.

I pitched in the 1965 World Series, 1970 ALS, 1976 NLCS and 1982 World Series.

Who am I?

JIM KAAT

I hit the most career HRs (612) without winning an MVP. Bonds, Aaron, Ruth, Pujols, ARod, Mays and Griffey Jr. are ahead of me on the career HR list all won MVPs.

Closest I got to MVP was 4th in 2003 when I led the majors with 47 HRs for the Phillies.

Lefty batter. 1B/DH.

Played for 6 teams over 22 seasons, the most in Cleveland.

Played in the 1995 World Series against the Braves, 1997 World Series against the Marlins.

Who am I?

JIM THOME

Please remember to check out

SUNDAYBASEBALLTIDBITS.COM

Over 5,000 pages of our back issues, trivia questions & answers, subscriber recommendations for best baseball books and websites. Special thanks to **Todd Mogren** for web support.

HOUSEKEEPING

Sunday Baseball Tidbits is distributed every Sunday morning. The goal is to provide “2 Cups of Coffee worth of baseball news, analysis, history and trivia” from a range of sources. All content belongs to its respective copyright holders. This newsletter is provided for the non-commercial enjoyment of our subscribers. Please email nhsuperseven@yahoo.com for a free subscription. We will never share your email address. Questions, comments, ideas, corrections and pointers to content you think subscribers would enjoy are encouraged and appreciated.

Our sources include:

The Athletic	Baseball-almanac.com
Baseballroundtable.com	Bleacher Report
Boston Globe	Mlb.com
The New York Times	Joe Posnanski newsletter
SABR.org	Sports Illustrated
Joe Sheehan newsletter	Baseballreference.com
ESPN.com	New York Post
SBNation	mlbtraderumors.com

baseballsavant.mlb.com

thebaseballcube.com

baseballthinkfactory.org

historicbaseball.com

ViSN (Vegas information and sports network)

Atlas Obscura

statmuse.com

Fangraphs.com

atlas obscura

Baseball's Best and Worst

Thedrummyangle.com

Please check them out and support them.