

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

7.16.2023

Good morning baseball fans,

This week lots of All-Star game notes, rooting for Drew Compton (see draft notes) and **Lou Gehrig** on the run.

In longer reads, old guy stories about **Stan Musial** and **John Montgomery Ward**, plus Immaculate Grid.

Grab yourself a coffee and enjoy.

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Whose record for the number of home runs in a year that didn't lead the majors did **Ken Griffey Jr.** break in 1997?

No other player has hit more walk-off home runs.

He retired with over 500 HRs, 2400 hit and 1500 RBI.

He was 3x MVP but not in the season that his 54 HRs didn't lead the majors (or his league).

Hall of Famer. Played his whole career for an AL team.

Name him.

In the Expansion Era (since 1961), who had more years between his first and second Most Valuable Player awards than any other American League player?

He won in 1983 and 1991.

Right-handed infielder.

One season, he played ninety-five games and didn't make a single error.

He was the first player to win the All-Star MVP award and the All-Star Home Run Derby held a day earlier.

Hall of Famer.

Name him.

Who is the only pitcher to give up two hundred home runs in the American League and two hundred home runs in the National League?

He struck out all the Alou brothers (not in the same game).

His career strikeouts numbers more than three thousand while the number of career bases-on-balls he gave up is fewer than one thousand.

He won a Cy Young in 1971, finished top three 4 other times.

Hall of Fame right hander, he led the majors in complete games 4 x on his way to 284 career wins, 3192 strikeouts.

He never pitched in the post-season.

Name him.

(answers at the bottom)

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Reds wunderkind Elly De La Cruz did something we've rarely seen before last Saturday: **He stole his way around the bases.**

The rookie stole second, third and home in the seventh inning of Cincinnati's 8-5 win over the Brewers, becoming the first player to steal three bases in one plate appearance since Rod Carew in 1969, per MLB. He's the first Red to do it since **Greasy Neale(!)** in 1919. Its fun to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT42mCeAll4>

De La Cruz, 21, is hitting .328 with four home runs and 16 steals in his first 29 MLB games. Elly De La Cruz stole three bases in the same at-bat (including a steal of third that evolved into a steal of home when the Brewers weren't paying attention). De La Cruz became the first since **Rod Carew** in 1961 to accomplish this feat. The last member of the Reds to steal all three bases in the same inning? How about 1919 when everyone's favorite college freshman roommate Greasy Neale.

He became the first Reds' player to steal second, third and home in the same inning since — I don't need to tell you this — the great Greasy Neale back in 1919.

Yes, that's the very same Greasy Neale who coached the Philadelphia Eagles to back-to-back world championships in 1948 and '49. He's in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He was also a star in the infamous 1919 World Series, hitting .357. They called him "Greasy," by the way, because he was so hard to tackle back when he played halfback at West Virginia University.

Greasy's trio of steals was not as impressive as De La Cruz's — he stole home on a double steal.

Ty Cobb and Honus Wagner stole all three bases in the same inning four times.

We do know that De La Cruz is only the second player since 1961 to steal the three bases in the same at-bat. The other was Rod Carew. He didn't do it on two pitches — in fact, he wasn't even the Twins player to steal home THAT INNING. This was 1969, **Mickey Lolich** was on the mound for Detroit, and it was the third inning. Lolich gave up a single to **Cesar Tovar** and then balked him to second. After Carew walked, Tovar stole third and Carew stole second.

Then, Tovar stole home and Carew stole third. Carew followed by stealing home — it was his fourth steal of home that season. In all, Rod Carew stole home 17 times, which is second among players since World War II, behind only **Jackie Robinson**.

Speaking of stealing home, an older piece from SABR.

LOU WHO? GEHRIG STOLE HOME 15 TIMES IN HIS CAREER

Ray Gonzalez, Baseball Research Journal

The recent disclosure that **Lou Brock** had never stolen home in his 900 successful thefts came as quite a surprise. Modern players are still stealing home — **Rod Carew** has done it more than a dozen times in his career — but Brock, the greatest base stealer of this century, has never done it.

Get ready for another surprise — about another Lou. Did you know that **Lou Gehrig**, the 210-pound slugger of the Yankees, stole home 15 times in his career? This ranks him pretty high on the all-time list, not far behind players like **Ty Cobb**, **George J. Burns**, **Johnny Evers**, **Eddie Collins**, **Frankie Frisch**, and **Jackie Robinson**, and ahead of **Honus Wagner** and **Max Carey**. But what is old “Piano-Legs” doing among those gazelles of by-gone eras?

Gehrig was not a graceful runner, but he was not slow. In addition, he was a real team player, and an aggressive one, who several times stole in extra innings. He stole 102 bases in his career, not bad for the 1925-38 hitters’ era when he was a star. Twenty-three of his 102 steals were double steals with another member of the Yankees, and he was on the front end of most of those.

The double steal is not employed much any more, but was used a fair amount before World War II. The Yankees, and particularly their sturdy first baseman and captain, used it most effectively. But this strategy never really received much notice. The focus was on Babe Ruth, the home run, and Murderer’s Row. But in the midst of all the thundering bats the Bronx Bombers were also stealing some bases, occasionally two at a time.

The Yankees were an excellent all-around ball club in the 1920s and 1930s, but there was so much emphasis in the press on hitting, that you had to almost read between the lines to get a more balanced view. Even when **Ben Chapman** stole 61 bases for the New Yorkers in 1931, Ruth and Gehrig were hitting 46 homers apiece and Lou was knocking in 184 runs. He also stole 17 bases that season, a career high for him. Three came in the April 27 game against

Washington, during which contest Gehrig and Chapman engineered a successful twin theft from second and third base. Typically the double steal is initiated with runners on first and third.

Gehrig stole his initial sack as a rookie on June 24, 1925. It was a steal of home, and the record books don't indicate whether any other player ever did this on his first theft. It was a double steal with catcher **Wally Schang** going down to second. On July 4, 1925, he stole his second base and it was of second base as **Bob Meusel** stole home. It was a double embarrassment for Philadelphia catcher **Mickey Cochrane**, who was the backstop during eight of Lou's career thefts.

Lou's favorite double steal partners were Ben Chapman and **Tony Lazzeri**. Chapman and Gehrig, alternating positions, worked it successfully five times. He did it four times with Lazzeri, with the Iron Horse serving as the "lead horse" each time. But Gehrig had more famous partners. In 1926 he stole home twice and Babe Ruth was his burglary mate on both occasions. This was a year before they became known as the "home run twins." A decade later, Lou teamed up with Joe DiMaggio in two successful double steals. This was somewhat unusual for DiMag as it wasn't long after when Yankee management decided he should not take the chance of injuring his legs stealing.

As a result, the elder DiMaggio, who was a very good base runner, ended his career with a meager 30 thefts. In contrast, Gehrig kept pushing to the end. His last two steals came in the same game, on September 7, 1938, against the Red Sox. Twice he walked and twice he swiped second. He really could be resourceful without using his big bat.

Carried below are his 15 steals of home and his eight other double steals.

Gehrig Steals of Home

- June 24, 1925 vs Wash. in 7th: double steal with **Wally Schang**
- Apr. 13, 1926 vs Bos. in 1st: double steal with **Babe Ruth**
- July 24, 1926 vs Chi. in 3rd: double steal with Babe Ruth
- June 11, 1927 vs Clev. in 5th: double steal with **Tony Lazzeri**
- June 29, 1927 vs Bos. in 8th: double steal with **Bob Meusel**
- July 30, 1927(1) vs Clev. in 3rd: double steal with Bob Meusel
- July 19, 1929 (1) vs Clev. in 2nd: double steal with **Cedric Durst**
- June 7, 1930 vs St. L. in 6th: double steal with **Bill Dickey**
- Apr. 15, 1931 vs Bos. in 8th: double steal with Tony Lazzeri
- July 28, 1931 vs Chi. in 5th: double steal with Ben Chapman
- Apr. 12, 1932 vs Phil. in 9th: double steal with Ben Chapman
- June 20, 1933 vs Chi. in 6th: double steal with Tony Lazzeri
- June 28, 1933 vs Det. in 9th: double steal with Ben Chapman
- June 2, 1934 vs Phil. in 1st: double steal with **Jack Saltzgaver**
- May 15, 1935 vs Det. in 7th: double steal with Tony Lazzeri

Other Gehrig Double Steals

- July 4, 1925(2) vs Phil. in 1st-Gehrig to second, Bob Meusel home
- Sep. 9, 1926 vs Bos. in 4th-Gehrig to second, **Earle Combs** home
- Sep. 13, 1930 (2) vs Det. in 1st-Gehrig to second, Earle Combs home
- Apr. 27, 1931 vs Wash. in 5th-Gehrig to third, Ben Chapman home
- July 23, 1933(2) vs Clev. in 5th-Ben Chapman to second, Gehrig third
- Aug. 31, 1933 vs Bos. in 1st-Gehrig to second, **Dixie Walker** home
- July 18, 1936 (2) vs St.L. in 3rd-Gehrig to second, **Joe DiMaggio** home
- July 18, 1937 vs Clev. in 3rd-Gehrig to second, Joe DiMaggio third

Patrick Corbin of the Nationals (6-10 and tied for the NL “lead” at the All Star break) has a real shot at being the first pitcher since **Phil Niekro** 43 years ago to lead his league in losses three years running.

The Yankees have posted the lowest batting average (.218), the lowest on-base percentage (.288) and the third-fewest runs (117) in MLB after **Aaron Judge** crashed into the right-field wall at Dodger Stadium on June 3.

Most Yankees RBI 1990-1999—**Paul O’Neil** drove in 688 runs for the Yankees during the 1990s, having been acquired from the Reds prior to the 1993 season. He finished the decade seven RBIs ahead of **Bernie Williams** (681), who debuted in 1991.

Third time through a lineup, batters hit .210 against **Shohei Ohtani**.

At the All Star break he also leads the AL:

6 triples

226 total bases

.663 SLG

1.050 OPS

182 OPS+

6.0 lowest hits per nine IP

6.5 WAR

Commissioner Rob Manfred is up for re-election. He currently makes \$25 million a year. Roger Goodell pulls in \$64 million as NFL commissioner. NBA commissioner Adam Silver and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman each make about \$10 million a year.

When **Nick Pivetta** and **James Paxton** won back-to-back games for the Red Sox against Oakland last week, they were the first Canadians to do that for the Sox since **Reggie Cleveland** and **Fergie Jenkins** from June 18-19, 1977 against the Yankees.

Pivetta's 413 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings are the most for a Sox pitcher from Canada since Cleveland had 752 $\frac{2}{3}$ from 1974-78.

30 year old **Manny Machado** hit his 300th career HR yesterday. The Padre star has homered in three consecutive games, and in five of his past six. After the first game of the doubleheader, Machado is 15-for-41 [.366] with eight home runs and 18 RBIs in July.

Machado became the 11th active player to reach the 300-homer plateau. **Evan Longoria** (342) and **Nolan Arenado** (318) are the only other third basemen on the list. Machado is one of just 18 third basemen in AL/NL history to reach the mark, doing so at age 31 years and nine days; **Eddie Mathews** (28 years and 188 days) is the only third baseman to hit his 300th home run at a younger age than Machado.

Active career HR list—300 HRs is a pretty exclusive club

Miguel Cabrera	509
Nelson Cruz	464
Giancarlo Stanton	389
Mike Trout	368
Joey Votto	349

Evan Longoria	342
Paul Goldschmidt	330
Nolan Arenado	318
Freddie Freeman	309
J.D. Martinez	305
Machado	300

Jumped out looking at expanded standings

Interleague:

Toronto	17-7
Oakland	9-18

Miami	20-8
Pittsburgh	11-18

Rays 7-1 vs Red Sox
Blue Jays 0-7 vs Red Sox

A's 0-6 vs Astros

Marlins 1-9 vs Braves
Cubs 6-0 vs Pirates

Take away Rays 7-1 against Red Sox and 6-1 against White Sox and they would be behind the Orioles in the AL east.

Josh and Bo Naylor became the first siblings in Cleveland history to hit a home run in the same game, each hitting a long ball in the third inning at Globe Life Field.

Brothers to homer for same team in same regular-season game
B.J. and Justin Upton, Braves (six times)

Jason and Jeremy Giambi, A's (four times)
Vladimir and Wilton Guerrero, Expos (four times)
Hank and Tommie Aaron, Braves (three times)
Lloyd and Paul Waner, Pirates (three times)
Adrian and Edgar Gonzalez, Padres (two times)
Cal and Billy Ripken, Orioles (two times)
Billy and Tony Conigliaro, Red Sox (two times)
Bo and Josh Naylor, Guardians
Adam and Andy LaRoche, Pirates
Benji and Jose Molina, Angels
Matty and Jesus Alou, Giants
Felipe and Matty Alou, Giants

The Uptons were also the last to hit a homer in the same inning when they went back-to-back on April 23, 2013. It was the eighth time brothers have homered in the same inning for the same team since 1900, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

But the Ferrell brothers may have one-upped the other occurrences by doing so in the same inning as opponents on July 19, 1933, when Cleveland pitcher **Wes Ferrell** hit a two-run homer off Boston's **Hank Johnson** in the top of the fourth, only to have his brother **Rick Ferrell**, the Red Sox's catcher, take him deep for a three-run shot in the bottom of the same frame.

From the positive trends file:

Average attendance through the first half, 28,382, is up 8.11 percent vs. 2022.

Ratings for the 29 U.S.-based regional sports networks is up three percent, despite all RSNs having lost between 7 and 13 percent of subscribers year over year.

Median age of ticket buyers this season, 43 years old, is six years younger than in 2019.

Giancarlo Stanton of the Yankees is hot. He has homered 4 times in his last 4 games. Saturday against Colorado he homered and drove in 4 runs to reach 1,000 career RBIs. He has 16 RBIs in his last 14 games.

Stanton is 9th in active career RBIs. **Miguel Cabrera** leads with 1861. **Hank Aaron** is the all-time leader with 2297.

165 big leaguers made more than 2,500 plate appearances and played at least 40 percent of their games as first basemen during the Modern Era, the period from 1961 to the present.

Albert Pujols topped his 164 competitors in wins above replacement (101.7), runs generated (3,429), and hits (3,384). He was Rookie of the Year and won 3 MVPs. He led the majors in runs scored 5 times, total bases 4 times, slugging pct and OPS 3 times.

Pujols finished his 22-year career with the St. Louis Cardinals and Los Angeles Angels with a total of 703 home runs. That's the fourth-highest sum for any player in major-league history and the highest for anybody who was primarily a first baseman.

On July 11, 1976, the Braves held a dual promotional event that began with several couples getting married at home plate and concluded with pro wrestling. It was promoted as "wed locks and headlocks". Nine couples were married before the game, and five wrestling matches were held after the Braves beat the Mets, 9–8.

According to STATS Perform, the rates of both stolen-base attempts and successes against relievers have increased by approximately the same amounts as they have against starters.

Against starters, the rate of attempts per game is up 34.2 percent and the rate of successes 41.8 percent, compared to 33.3 percent and 42.5 percent, respectively against relievers.

Overall, the number of attempts per game entering Friday night had increased from 0.67 to 0.91, and the success rate has increased from 75.4 to 79.5 percent.

Of the major leaguers with enough plate appearances to qualify, the leading Cub in OPS was **Ian Happ**, who ranked 69th. The Braves had six players ahead of Happ. The Dodgers had three of the top 14, the Rays three of the top 18, the Diamondbacks three of the top 27.

The only player to lead the AL/NL in triples and home runs in the same season--**Jim Rice**, BOS (15 3Bs and 46 HRs in 1978)

The only leadoff hitters who have won a Most Valuable Player award this century are **Ichiro Suzuki** (Mariners, 2001), **Jimmy Rollins** (Phillies, 2007), and **Mookie Betts** (Red Sox, 2018).

This might change with **Ronald Acuna Jr.** Acuña's line for the season includes 79 runs, 21 home runs, and 41 stolen bases through 89 games in addition to throwing out seven runners from right field for the 60-29 Braves.

Speaking of Acuna and the chase for 40-40...four Braves players with at least 30 home runs and 30 stolen bases in the same season--**Hank Aaron** (1963), **Dale Murphy** (1983), **Ron Gant** (1990 & '91) and Ronald Acuña Jr. (2019).

Highest Career Slugging % for 3B

Nolan Arenado .532

Chipper Jones .529

Mike Schmidt .527

Raphael Devers .510

Two pitchers who were looking for a big 2023 to deliver big free agent contracts are not getting it done:

Aaron Nola (8-6) of the Phillies is having the worst year of his career, with a 4.34 FIP and 4.39 ERA through 19 starts. In his last seven outings, **Luis Severino** of the Yankees has given up 37

runs and 53 hits. The only other Yankee pitcher with as bad of a seven-game stretch ever was **A.J. Burnett** in 2011.

The MLB record for hit batsmen in an appearance is four, a record tied by San Diego's **Joe Musgrove** as he was shutting out the Mets for six innings this week. Musgrove became the 50th pitcher to hit four men in a game, and the first since **Zac Gallen** did it last year, also in a win.

Hitting four men would seem to indicate a lack of command, so the interesting number is the "0" in the walks column. To hit four men while not walking anybody is an unusual combination, something just six other men have done: Gallen last year, **Scott Schoeneweis** in 2001, **Bert Blyleven** in 1988, **Frank Lary** in 1960, **Charley Schanz** in 1945, and **Bill Carrick** in 1901. Musgrove, in addition to being the most recent player to do it, is both the oldest and the one who struck out the most batters in his game.

At the All-Star break **Masataka Yoshida** of the Red Sox had 7 straight multi-hits games, longest streak in the majors this year. **Rogers Hornsby** had 13 straight multi-hit games. **Lourdes Gurriel Jr.** of the Blue Jays in 2018 reached 11 to become 7th player since 1900 to top 10 straight. **Tony Perez** had 11 in 1973.

The Rangers have a shot at joining the 1932 Yankees, the 1936 Yankees and the 1999 Indians scoring more than 1,000 runs in a season.

At 25-67 the A's won't have the worst record ever. The 1899 Cleveland Spiders (20-134) and the 1916 Philadelphia Athletics (36-117) and the 1962 Mets (40-120) look safe. They may not even be the worst team this year—the Royals are sitting at 26-65.

The Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres will meet for two games in Seoul, South Korea, to open the 2024 season, MLB announced Wednesday.

The matchups will mark the first-ever regular-season games to be played in Korea. They will take place on March 20 and 21.

The Astros and Rockies will play a two-game series in Mexico City on April 27-28, and the Phillies and Mets will play a two-game series in London on June 8-9. There will also be a pair of

Spring Training matchups between the Red Sox and Rays on March 9-10 that will take place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Dodgers-Padres will mark the ninth opening series outside of the U.S. and Canada in MLB history. The league most recently saw the Athletics and Mariners face off in 2019 in Tokyo.

The MLB World Tour will feature up to 24 regular-season games and up to 16 exhibition games in Asia, Mexico and Latin America, and Europe between the 2023-2026 seasons.

Robot umpires, while possible, do not seem to be on the agenda of commissioner Rob Manfred.

The commissioner gave what seemed to be an endorsement of the challenge system now used in the minor leagues. Instead of having all pitches called by a computer connected to a tracking system, teams have three challenges.

The challenges can be initiated only by the pitcher, hitter or catcher and must be done immediately — no review behind the scenes first.

Any correct challenge is retained.

“The people’s reaction to it was really positive, really positive,” Manfred said when he met with writers at the All-Star Game. “I think if we had to make a decision today, which we don’t have to, that there would be more support for at least beginning with the challenge system.”

MLB’s competition committee could get a challenge system in place as soon as next season.

For the first time in his 26-year tenure as general manager of the Yankees, Brian Cashman fired a coach or manager during the season last week when he replaced hitting coach **Dillon Lawson** with **Sean Casey**. New York has averaged 3.77 runs with a .663 OPS since **Aaron Judge** went on the injured list June 4.

Phillies manager **Rob Thomson** added Pirates manager **Derek Shelton** to the All-Star Game coaching staff. Their connection goes back to 1993 when Thomson was a coach with Single A Greensboro in the Yankees system and Shelton was a 22-year-old backup catcher on the same team as **Derek Jeter** and

Mariano Rivera. That was Shelton's final season as a player. He started coaching with the Yankees in 1997 at Thomson's suggestion.

MLB's most popular jerseys (per sales on MLBShop.com) are **Ronald Acuña Jr., Shohei Ohtani,** and **Fernando Tatis Jr.**

Triple Crowns

Batting Triple Crown (batting average, HRs and RBI) has been achieved 28 times, with the following breakdown for each major league:

10 - AL

6 - NL

1- AA (1887)

11 - Negro Leagues

Players who have won multiple batting triple crowns include **Oscar Charleston** (3), **Ted Williams** (2), **Josh Gibson** (2), and **Rogers Hornsby** (2).

The last batting triple crown was won by **Miguel Cabrera** in 2012, who had 44 HR, 139 RBI, and a .330 BA for the Tigers. Prior to that, **Carl Yastrzemski** was the most recent, in 1967, when he had 44 HR, 121 RBI, and a .326 BA.

Pitching Triple Crown (wins, strikeouts, ERA) has been achieved 43 times, with the following breakdown for each major league:

17 - AL

21 - NL

1 - AA (1884)

4 - Negro Leagues

Players who have won multiple pitching triple crowns include **Sandy Koufax** (3), **Walter Johnson** (3), **Grover Alexander** (3), **Roger Clemens** (2), **Lefty Gomez** (2), **Lefty Grove** (2), and **Christy Mathewson** (2).

The last full-season pitching triple crowns came in 2011, when both leagues had one: **Justin Verlander** of the Tigers led the AL with a 2.40 ERA, 24 wins, and 250 strikeouts, and **Clayton Kershaw** led the NL with a 2.28 ERA, 21 wins, and 248 strikeouts.

Babe Ruth never won a batting triple crown. He came closest in 1924 when he led the AL in HR (46) and batting average (.378), but came in second in RBI (124). That was his only batting title, compared with leading the AL in HR 12 times and RBI 5 times. On the pitching side he paced the AL in ERA with a 1.75 mark in 1916, but never ranked higher than 3rd in wins or strikeouts.

DRAFT NOTES

Pirates — RHP Paul Skenes (LSU)

Nationals — OF Dylan Crews (LSU)

Became the first teammates to be drafted 1-2.

For sixth pick Jacob Wilson SS, Grand Canyon University), it was a homecoming of sorts; he was present at the draft in Seattle where his dad, Jack, played with the Mariners from 2009-11.

The Blue Jays took shortstop Arjun Nimmala, and this is such a cool story — he's the first player of Indian descent taken in the first round.

First-round picks

1. Pittsburgh Pirates: Paul Skenes, RHP, LSU
2. Washington Nationals: Dylan Crews, OF, LSU
3. Detroit Tigers: Max Clark, OF, Franklin HS (IN)
4. Texas Rangers: Wyatt Langford, OF, Florida
5. Minnesota Twins: Walker Jenkins, OF, South Brunswick HS (NC)
6. Oakland Athletics: Jacob Wilson, SS, Grand Canyon
7. Cincinnati Reds: Rhett Lowder, RHP, Wake Forest
8. Kansas City Royals: Blake Mitchell, C, Sinton High (Texas)
9. Colorado Rockies: Chase Dollander, RHP, Tennessee
10. Miami Marlins: Noble Meyer, RHP, Jesuit HS (OR)
11. Los Angeles Angels: Nolan Schanuel, 1B, FAU
12. Arizona Diamondbacks: Tommy Troy, SS, Stanford

13. Chicago Cubs: Matt Shaw, SS, Maryland
14. Boston Red Sox: Kyle Teel, C, Virginia
15. Chicago White Sox: Jacob Gonzalez, SS, Mississippi
16. San Francisco Giants: Bryce Eldridge, 1B/RHP, James Madison HS (VA)
17. Baltimore Orioles: Enrique Bradfield Jr., OF Vanderbilt
18. Milwaukee Brewers: Brock Wilken, 3B, Wake Forest
19. Tampa Bay Rays: Brayden Taylor, 3B, TCU
20. Toronto Blue Jays: Arjun Nimmala, SS, Strawberry Crest HS (FL)
21. St. Louis Cardinals: Chase Davis, OF, Arizona
22. Seattle Mariners: Colt Emerson, SS/3B, Glenn HS (OH)
23. Cleveland Guardians: Ralph Velazquez, C/1B, Huntington Beach HS (CA)
24. Atlanta Braves: Hurston Waldrep, RHP, Florida
25. San Diego Padres: Dillon Head, OF, Homewood-Flossmoor HS (IL)
26. New York Yankees: George Lombard Jr., SS/3B, Gulliver Prep (FL)
27. Philadelphia Phillies: Aidan Miller, SS, Mitchell HS (FL)
28. Houston Astros: Brice Matthews, SS, Nebraska
29. Seattle Mariners: Jonny Farmelo, OF, Westfield High (VA)
30. Seattle Mariners: Tai Peete, SS, Trinity Christian High (GA)
31. Tampa Bay Rays: Adrian Santana, SS, Doral Academy (FL)
32. New York Mets: Colin Houck, SS, Parkview HS (GA)
33. Milwaukee Brewers: Josh Knoth, RHP, Patchogue-Medford HS (NY)
34. Minnesota Twins: Charlee Soto, RHP, Reborn Christian Academy (FL)
35. Miami Marlins: Thomas White, LHP, Phillips Academy (MA)
36. Los Angeles Dodgers: Kendall George, OF, Atascocita HS (TX)
37. Detroit Tigers: Kevin McGonigle, SS, Monsignor Bonner HS (PA)
38. Cincinnati Reds: Ty Floyd, RHP, LSU
39. Oakland Athletics: Myles Naylor, 3B, St. Joan of Arc HS (ON)

Only five of the first 32 players selected in the first round were pitchers and only one was a high school pitcher (not including two-way player Bryce Eldridge, whom the Giants took at No. 16), which demonstrates how much front offices have devalued high school arms because of the high risk of them either regressing or undergoing some type of surgery between the time they're drafted and (hopefully) reach the major leagues.

Also interesting: Of the first 32 players selected, there were 11 shortstops, eight outfielders, three third basemen, three first basemen and two catchers. That means more than one-third of those top picks were shortstops. Jack Wilson was the first shortstop off the board at No. 6 to the A's, followed by Matt Shaw (Cubs) at No. 13, Jacob Gonzalez (White Sox) at No. 15, Brayden Taylor (Rays) at No. 19, Arjun Nimmala (Blue Jays) at No. 20, Colt Emerson (Mariners) at No. 22, George Lombard Jr. (Yankees) at No. 26, Brice Matthews (Astros) at No. 28, Tai Peete (Mariners) at No. 30, Adrian Santana (Rays) at No. 31 and finally, Colin Houck at No. 32 to the Mets. Of note: I felt the White Sox, Blue Jays and Mets were very fortunate that Gonzalez,

Nimmala and Houck, respectfully, fell as far as they did because all three were top-half-of-the-first-round talents and would have been taken much earlier in most drafts, but because this draft was so deep, they fell.

Our NJ subscribers are tracking Drew Compton (son of a loyal subscriber). The Georgia Tech 3B/1B/OF signed with the Braves as an undrafted free agent. He played for Governor Livingston HS in Berkeley Heights, NJ and then Georgia Tech. He played two summers in the Cape Cod League. He graduated in May.

Compton was starting third baseman for Georgia Tech in 2021 and 2022. As a Freshman, he batted .294/.393/.567/.960, had 17 multi-hit games and 10 multi-RBI games, and finished the season with a team-leading 13 homers. Compton backed that up by batting .275/.378/.515/.893, including 14 homers, 10 doubles, and two triples, driving in 58 runs with 10 multi-hit/multi-RBI games. He played in only eight games this season after suffering an injury while running out a double on April 1. Over his career he hit .292 with 36 HRs as a Yellow Jacket. 149 RBI and 333 total bases in 722 plate appearances.



It's a long road but we're pulling for him to climb to the majors. The goal is to get a text from his dad from the ball park during Drew's first MLB at bat.

HOF BACK IN THE DAY

On July 10, 1945, ten new members are inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Among them are catcher **Roger Bresnahan**, outfielder **Hugh Duffy**, and shortstop **Hughie Jennings**.

Roger Bresnahan is generally regarded as the most famous catcher of the deadball era. In a time when catchers rarely batted higher than 8th, Bresnahan was a leadoff hitter due to his high on base percentage and speed that belied his 200 pound frame. He broke into the majors as a pitcher, throwing a six hit shutout in his first appearance but had the ability to play every other position. Perhaps his most notable contributions to the game were in the development of protective equipment. Bresnahan is credited for the development of the batting helmet, shin guards for catchers, and improving the safety of the catcher's mask. Despite initial ridicule and protest, these safety measures all caught on and are standard equipment in today's game.

Hughie Jennings, for his career stole 359 bases, walked 347 times, and holds the record for number of times hit by a pitch at 287. Each of these totaling more than his meager strikeout total of 233.

Hugh Duffy, holds the single season record with a .438 batting average. In 1894, he amassed 234 hits in only 124 games, while playing for the Boston Beaneaters. Duffy collected 50 doubles and 18 homeruns during that amazing season!

NO-NO DETROIT

A dozen years after **Justin Verlander** no-hit the Blue Jays in Toronto, **Matt Manning** led the trio that repeated the feat in Detroit, combining to hold the mighty Blue Jays lineup to three walks and a hit batter. It marked the second no-hitter in three years for the Tigers, who watched **Spencer Turnbull** blank the Mariners in Seattle on May 18, 2021. It was also the first no-hitter at Comerica Park since Verlander shut down the Brewers on June 12, 2007.

Manning teamed up with relievers **Jason Foley** and **Alex Lange** for the ninth no-hitter in franchise history -- and its first combined no-no -- in a 2-0 win over the Blue Jays.

For Tigers manager **A.J. Hinch**, it wasn't a first; he has managed six no-hitters — second-most in MLB history (**Walter Alston**, seven)

Tigers no-hitters:

July 8, 2023: **Matt Manning, Jason Foley and Alex Lange**

Tigers 2, Blue Jays 0

May 18, 2021: **Spencer Turnbull**

Tigers 5, Mariners 0

Turnbull was nearly perfect, allowing just two baserunners via walk. Turnbull also struck out nine batters during his performance. It was the first complete game of his career, and he had not pitched into the eighth inning before.

May 7, 2011: **Justin Verlander**

Tigers 9, Blue Jays 0

This one was agonizingly close to being a perfect game. With one out in the eighth, rookie **J.P. Arencibia** took a 100-mph fastball on the outside corner to draw a full-count walk. It was the Blue Jays' only baserunner of the day.

June 12, 2007: **Justin Verlander**

Tigers 4, Brewers 0

Verlander collected his first no-hitter in his second full season with the Tigers. He struck out a career-high 12 batters and threw 112 pitches. It was the first no-hitter thrown at Comerica Park.

April 7, 1984: **Jack Morris**

Tigers 4, White Sox 0

Morris, wearing No. 47, threw his no-hitter against the White Sox on April 7, or 4/7. It became the earliest in the season that a no-hitter had been thrown.

July 20, 1958: **Jim Bunning**

Tigers 3, Red Sox 0

Bunning struck out 12 and walked two against a lineup that featured **Ted Williams, Frank Malzone and Jackie Jensen**.

Aug. 25, 1952: **Virgil Trucks**

Tigers 1, Yankees 0

103 days after throwing his first no-hitter, Virgil Trucks did it again. Trucks joined **Johnny Vander Meer** (1938 Reds) and **Allie Reynolds** ('51 Yankees) as the only pitchers to throw two no-hitters in the same season. **Nolan Ryan** ('73 Angels), **Roy Halladay** (2010 Phillies) and **Max Scherzer** ('15 Nationals) have done it since.

May 15, 1952: **Virgil Trucks**

Tigers 1, Senators 0

Trucks had struggled in his first four starts. He gave up 30 hits and was charged with 16 earned runs in 15 2/3 innings.

July 4, 1912: **George Mullin**

Tigers 7, Browns 0

“Wabash George” threw the first no-hitter in Tigers history on his 32nd birthday.

HAVE A DAY

Francisco Lindor, who otherwise is having a down year offensively. Lindor did something that has only been done six other times in the history of major league baseball:

- 5+ Hits
- 1+ HR
- 2+ Triples

Here are the other six players who have accomplished this rare feat:

Dmitri Young - On May 6, 2003, while playing DH for the Tigers, Young had a big game against the Orioles. The Tigers barely won the game 7-6, but Young went 5-5, with two HR, two triples, and a single, scoring just twice, but getting five RBIs.

Overall Young played 13 seasons for the Cardinals, Reds, Tigers, and Nationals, from 1996-2008. That game in 2003 was one part of his best season in which he hit 29 HR with 85 RBI, and had a .297/.372/.537 slash line and 144 OPS+. A two-time All-Star, Young played a mix of 1B, OF, and DH, and ended his career with 171 HR, a .292/.351/.475 slash line, and 114 OPS+.

Willie Mays - On May 13, 1958, Mays' Giants played the Dodgers and won the high-scoring game 16-9, with Mays hitting two HR, two triples, a single, and walking once. Mays had four RBIs and scored four runs, while also stealing a base and getting caught stealing once. The Giants that day banged out 26 hits, with four players contributing four hits each: **Orlando Cepeda, Bob Schmidt, Danny O'Connell, and Daryl Spencer** (who had two HR, a triple, and a double). The Dodgers used five pitchers that day, with **Don Newcombe** starting but lasting only 2.1 IP, and then a young **Sandy Koufax** was one of the relievers.

Hoot Evers - On September 7, 1950, LF Hoot Evers of the Tigers had a big day against the Indians. This game was a battle between top clubs, as the Tigers were 82-48 and the Indians were 80-54. The game went into extras, but ended in a 13-13 tie after 10 innings. Evers went 5-6 and was the only player on this list to hit for the cycle, hitting one HR, two triples, a double, and a single. He scored three runs and had six RBIs. The starting pitcher for the Indians? Hall of Famer **Bob Feller**, who interestingly hit a HR himself as part of a 7-run first inning, but then gave up 4 ER in just one-third of an inning and was taken out.

Evers had a long career, starting with a couple years in the minors, but then missing three full years because of military service in WWII. When he returned he played in the majors from 1946-56, mostly for the Tigers, but also had short stints with the Red Sox, Indians, Orioles, and Giants. Playing mostly CF and LF, he was an All-Star in 1948 and 1950, the two seasons he had 100+ RBI. Overall he hit 98 HR, with a .278/.353/.426 slash line and 107 OPS+.

Rogers Hornsby - On June 28, 1916, the future Hall of Famer Hornsby, in his first full season, playing 3B and batting fifth, had a huge game for the Cardinals against the Reds. He went 5-5 with one HR, two triples, and two singles. He only scored two runs with two RBIs, but his Cardinals won the game 9-6.

Cy Seymour - On April 20, 1907, CF Cy Seymour of the Giants had a great game helping them win 13-2 against the Boston Doves (the franchise that is today the Atlanta Braves). He went 5-6

with one HR, two triples, and two singles. He added a stolen base, scored two runs, and drove in six. He and his teammates backed Hall of Famer **Joe McGinnity** who pitched a complete game, allowing only five hits and two earned runs.

Seymour had an interesting career in that he started out primarily as a pitcher for the Giants from 1896-1900. He had some success, leading the NL in strikeouts twice, but was also wild and led the league in walks three times. A capable hitter, he switched to the outfield and played for Baltimore and Cincinnati before returning to the Giants during the 1906 season. His best statistics came the year before when for the Reds he led the NL with 219 hits, 40 doubles, 21 triples, 121 RBI, a .377 average, .559 SLG, and 181 OPS+. Overall for his career he had a 61-56 record as a pitcher with a 3.73 ERA and 102 ERA+, and as a batter had 1,724 hits, 229 doubles, 96 triples, 52 HR, 222 SB, a .303/.347/.405 slash line and 118 OPS+.

Harry Davis - On July 10, 1901, 1B Harry Davis and the Philadelphia Athletics beat the Boston Americans (Red Sox) by a score of 13-6. Davis went 5-6 with one HR, two triples, and two singles, while also stealing a base, scoring four runs, and driving in three. Davis batted second that day, and right behind him was **Lave Cross** who also went 5-6, with one double and four singles.

Davis had a long career, starting in 1895 with the New York Giants, then playing for Pittsburgh, Louisville, and Washington before spending his best seasons for the Athletics from 1901-1911. He was a player-manager for the Cleveland Naps in 1912, and then returned to the Athletics from 1913-1917 as a coach and occasional player, though he only accumulated 33 more plate appearances during those final five seasons. He was a solid hitter during his prime, leading the AL in doubles three times, RBIs twice, and HR four times in a row with totals of 10, 8, 12, and 8 from 1904-1907. Over his career he had 1,841 hits, 361 doubles, 145 triples, 75 HR, 285 SB, a .277/.335/.408 slash line and 119 OPS+.

Given that it was twenty years between Young and Lindor posting a game with 5 hits, two triples, and at least one homer, I wonder how long it will be before we see that stat line again?

All data is from Baseball-Reference.com, and also their subscription service Stathead.com. If you are a big sports fan, be sure to check out the latest features at Stathead and the Sports Reference family of sites.

On July 10, 1934, in one of the most memorable All-Star Game performances ever, **Carl Hubbell** strikes out five consecutive future Hall of Famers. **Hubbell fanned Ruth, Gehrig, Jimmie Foxx, Al Simmons, and Joe Cronin** in that game won by the American League, 9-7. Hubbell himself gained entry to the Hall in 1947.

In 1936, at Forbes Field, **Chuck Klein** hits 4 home runs in one game, including the tie-breaker in the tenth, helping the Phillies defeat the Pirates, 9-6. The Indianapolis, Indiana native barely misses hitting an additional homer in the second when right fielder **Paul Waner** catches his drive against the wall. At 36, Klein is the oldest player ever to hit four homers in a game, and the first National Leaguer in the 20th century to do so.

On July 10, 1982, **Larry Parrish** of the Texas Rangers tied a major league record by clubbing his third grand slam within the span of a week. Parrish's latest slam lifted the Rangers to a 6-5 win over the Detroit Tigers. In 1968, Detroit's **Jim Northrup** also hit three grand slams in a week.

On July 12, 1931, with a record crowd at St. Louis's Sportsman's Park that exceeded the number of seats in the stadium by more than 10,000, the Cubs and Cardinals combined to set the MLB record for most doubles in a game. In the second game of the day's doubleheader, the two teams hit a combined 23 doubles. After hitting a total of nine in the first game, the teams combined for 32 doubles over the course of the two games—a record for a doubleheader.

The bustling crowd was the reason for the preposterous number of doubles as fans far exceeded the confines of the stadium. With a recorded 45,715 fans at a stadium that had only about 34,000 seats, the excess fans crowded into the aisles and, eventually, onto the outfield grass, according to a 2017 SABR article by John J. Watkins. Ropes set up to corral the crowd didn't help much, and spectators raced to pick up any ball hit near them to take home as a souvenir. Any ball hit into the part of the field overtaken by the fans was ruled a ground rule double, so routine fly balls became extra-base hits.

The situation was especially farcical for the second game of the doubleheader. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the fans in left field began the game about 50 to 75 feet behind third base and inched closer as the game wore on, until they were so close in the later innings that "a ball that dropped over the third baseman's head was gobbled up by the insatiable mob."

The overflow crowd helped Cardinals outfielder **Chick Hafey** with the 1931 batting title. As Watkins points out, Hafey, the Giants' **Bill Terry** and the Cardinals' **Jim Bottomley** finished the season separated by a mere .000721 in the batting race. One of the three hits Hafey picked up in the second game of the doubleheader was a double into the crowd that likely would have been caught if not for the intruders on the grass. That one out would have been enough to drop his batting average from .349 to .347 and give the crown to Terry.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS

Hal McCrae	78
Andre Dawson	69
Willie Wilson	68
Mario Soto	67
Robin Ventura	56
Javier Lopez	56

SHIFTY IMPACT

While batting average on balls in play *is* up by 7 points pulled grounders and liners from lefty batters are up by 36 points (thank you shift limits).

Most estimated hits gained due to positioning rules, 2023

- 14: **José Ramírez**
- 13: **Jarred Kelenic**
- 12: **Josh Naylor, Kyle Tucker Anthony Santander**
- 10: **Anthony Rizzo, MJ Melendez**
- 9: **Bryce Harper**
- 8: **Cody Bellinger, Corey Seager, Jason Heyward, Adley Rutschman, Shohei Ohtani, Ryan McMahon**

Nearly 90% of hitters are between +4 hits gained and -4 hits lost. comparing the first three months of this season to the first three months of last season, we saw more than 300 additional hits by lefty batters on pulled grounders. Last year the shift was deployed against **Kyle Schwarber** 91% of the time and **Steven Kwan** saw it 5% of the time.

ALL STAR STUFF

Derby Day

After dispatching hometown hero **Julio Rodríguez** in the semifinals, **Vlad Guerrero Jr.** took down **Randy Arozarena**, 25-23, in the finals to make the Guerreros the first father-son combo to win the Derby. Vlad jr was 8 when his dad won. Vlad jr. finished second to **Pete Alonso** in 2019.

Guerrero's opening round, with his manager, **John Schneider**, throwing to him like he did in 2019, began awkwardly. It took Vlad a handful of swings -- and 25 seconds of his allotted three minutes -- to go deep. Uncharacteristically lofting the ball instead of smacking rocket line drives, he struggled to find his rhythm.

But when it came, it came. Guerrero finished his three minutes with 17 homers, then he hit an additional nine in his one-minute bonus period, capping it with a 419-foot blast. Poor Mookie Betts, undersized for this event, didn't stand a chance, notching just 11 homers to allow Guerrero to advance.

In the semifinals, it was Rodríguez -- like Guerrero in 2019 -- who had to deal with the tiring effects of a record-breaking round. J-Rod had hit 41 homers in his opening turn to break Guerrero's '19 single-round record. Rodríguez nevertheless managed to muscle out 20 more before Guerrero took his turn.

J-Rod was the fan favorite, which made Guerrero, well, the opposite. The Mariners fans in attendance (and of course, there were many) cheered each time he grounded the ball. But Guerrero didn't do that often. He tied Rodríguez's 20 at the buzzer of his three minutes, then he needed just three swings in bonus time to hit No. 21 and reach the final again.

Julio Rodríguez stunned for a round, smashing 41 homers, a single-round record, in front of the home crowd to send two-time champ Pete Alonso home.

The format was not in Guerrero's favor, because it required him to bat first in the final, immediately after walking off Rodríguez in the semifinals. It didn't matter. Guerrero hit 14 home runs in the final 1:13 of regulation -- a homer every 5.2 seconds. He finished the shorter two-minute regulation period with 20 homers, then he hit another five in his minute of bonus time.

Arozarena had his work cut out for him, and he put up an admirable effort that included 15 homers in his final 90 seconds. But when Arozarena came up just short, Guerrero stormed onto the field and playfully did the “Randy pose” in front of the runner-up.

Guerrero hit 91 homers in 2019 and lost. On this night, he was more efficient, claiming the crown with 72 dingers. Having won the **Ted Williams** All-Star Game MVP honor in '21, Guerrero has another trophy for his case. He’s got a long way to go, of course, before reaching Cooperstown like his dad, but his career is off to a pretty dynamic start.

Adley Rutschman did not make it past the first round of the T-Mobile Home Run Derby on Monday, but he sure put on a show.

With a power display from both sides of the plate, Rutschman smashed 27 home runs in an electric first-round matchup against Luis Robert Jr. of the White Sox, who bested Rutschman by hitting 28 home runs to advance to Round 2. The Derby was a family affair for the Rutschmans, with Adley’s dad, Randy, on the mound feeding him fastballs. Rutschman competed in his initial three-minute period as the only left-handed hitter in the Derby field and hit 20 home runs. Then, after a break, he switched to the right side of the plate and added seven more home runs in a 30-second bonus round afforded each hitter, clearing the fence on seven of eight swings.

Earlier in the day, Rutschman remembered the first time he attended a Major League game, back when he was 8 years old and T-Mobile Park was still Safeco Field.

He had an upper-deck seat in right field to watch the Mariners play that day, and **Adrián Beltré** swatted an opposite-field home run.

How many home runs did all 10 competitors *combine* to hit in the entire inaugural Home Run Derby in 1985? That would be **31**. So, 10 fewer than Julio Rodríguez hit in his first turn at bat last night.

Considering how anticlimactic the early iterations of the derby were, it’s a miracle that it’s now become a must-see event. From 1985 to ’91, players each got two turns at bat and had five outs before their turn was over. Any swing that did not result in a homer was ruled an out.

Reds outfielder **Dave Parker** won the first derby with six homers. **Wally Joyner and Darryl Strawberry** tied the following year with four each. The worst derby was either 1987, when **Andre Dawson** won with four homers, beating **Ozzie Virgil** (two), **George Bell** and **Mark McGwire** (one each), or ’90, when five of the eight competitors failed to send a single ball over the fence. **Ryne Sandberg** won that year with three and was the only player to hit more than one homer.

MLB tweaked the format in 1991, expanding the competition to three rounds with 10 outs per round. That format (with some small tweaks over the years) produced some memorable moments, including **Bobby Abreu's** 24 first-round homers in 2005 and **Josh Hamilton's** 28 at Yankee Stadium in '08, but the decision to change from outs to timed rounds beginning with the '15 derby added new life to the exhibition.

No one has won as many Derby titles as **Ken Griffey Jr.'s** three. He was in 8 HR Derbies 1990-2000. He didn't win in 1993 in Baltimore but did hit the warehouse in RF— The 465-foot shot remains the only home run to hit the warehouse in the air, either in an exhibition or in a game. In 1994 in Pittsburgh Griffey hit seven homers at Three Rivers Stadium -- five of which landed in the upper deck -- to claim his first Derby trophy. 1998 Derby at Coors Field. But he not only changed his mind, he went and won it with 19 homers over three rounds, besting Cleveland slugger **Jim Thome**. He won again in 1999 at Fenway Park.

Team has had the most Home Run Derby winners--the Yankees (**Tino Martinez**, 1997; **Jason Giambi**, 2002; **Robinson Canó**, 2011; **Aaron Judge**, 2017).

Origins of Home Run Derby

In 1960, the syndicated television show "Home Run Derby" appeared, with the first match-up featuring **Mickey Mantle** against **Willie Mays**.

Not only that, but in that first "Home Run Derby" — the format was an inning-by-inning matchup with each player getting 27 "outs"* — Mays led 8 home runs to 3 going into the seventh inning, but Mantle cracked six home runs in the final three innings to take the \$2,000 prize.*

In all, 10 Hall of Famers — Mantle, Mays, **Ernie Banks**, **Harmon Killebrew**, **Henry Aaron**, **Eddie Mathews**, **Al Kaline**, **Duke Snider**, **Frank Robinson** and **Gil Hodges** — appeared on Home Run Derby

Game Notes

Hit machine **Luis Arraez** and power righty **Pablo López** became linked on Jan. 20, when they were traded for each other in a deal between the Twins and Marlins. Six months later, they made baseball history as a duo.

Arraez and López are the first two players swapped for one another to be selected to the same All-Star Game in 15 years. That connection had not been recognized since righty **Edinson Vólquez** and outfielder **Josh Hamilton** (Rangers-Reds) during the 2008 season. Arraez and López bonded during the World Baseball Classic playing together on Team Venezuela.

López posted a 5-5 record with a 3.89 ERA in the first half for his All-Star debut; Arraez's batting average has reached .400 and he entered the break hitting .383, including the first cycle in Marlins history, to earn his second All-Star nod.

Two future Hall of Famers homered in the last All-Star Game played in Seattle (2001)--**Cal Ripken Jr.** (who won All-Star MVP) and **Derek Jeter**.

All of the team mascots attended the Home Run Derby and were introduced before the game. Orbit, the Astros mascot, was loudly booed by the crowd at T-Mobile Park. The trash-can scandal will never go away

I hated the All-Star uniforms. I get it that MLB wants to sell more merch but they could have had players wear their own uniforms with gold around the numbers—another unique jersey to sell and it would have looked much better.

Last week I mentioned how effective Oriole reliever **Felix Bautista** has been. Then he looks awful as losing pitcher. He served up the pitch that Colorado's **Elias Díaz**, a 32-year-old first-time All-Star, shocked the world with his first pinch home run in *nine* big-league seasons ... with his NL team just six outs from its 10th straight All-Star defeat.

Díaz was once DFA'd by the Pirates, he wears the name of his mother, Ana, on his chest protector (she was once kidnapped in Venezuela and rescued three days later) and made his first All-Star Game at 32—15 years after signing as a pro.

More about Díaz' HR

Lead-flipping pinch homers in All-Star history, in the eighth inning or later:

2003 — **Hank Blalock**, AL, off **Eric Gagne**

1972 — **Cookie Rojas**, AL, off **Bill Stoneman**

1954 — **Gus Bell**, NL, off **Bob Keegan**

Lead-flipping homers, not by pinch hitters, in the eighth inning or later:

1981 — **Mike Schmidt**, NL, off **Rollie Fingers**

1941 — **Ted Williams**, AL, off **Claude Passeau**

Pinch homers by catchers in an All-Star Game

2023 – **Elias Díaz**, off **Félix Bautista**

2007 – **Victor Martinez**, off **Billy Wagner**

It was the first pinch homer by any National Leaguer to give his team the lead this late in an All-Star Game since a tie-breaking shot by **Jeff Conine** off **Steve Ontiveros** in 1995 ... and it was the first pinch home run Díaz had ever hit in the big leagues, in any situation.

Bautista had allowed only two home runs *to the previous 155 hitters he'd faced this year*.

Marlins' **Luis Arraez** entered the game hitting .383, the highest average of any All-Star in more than two decades. And then he exited hitting 1.000 in this All-Star Game after going 2 for 2. Others who have done that since Ted Williams in 1941-- **Tony Gwynn, 1994** — Came in batting .383, went 2 for 5, with a two-run double versus **David Cone** early and a memorable 10th-inning single that allowed him to score the winning run on a **Moises Alou** double.

Rod Carew, 1983 — Went 2 for 3, with an RBI and an intentional walk — reaching base three times in the first three innings. Carew's RBI single came in the third ... and scored fellow Hall of Famer **Dave Winfield**.

Stan Musial, 1948 — Went 2 for 4, with two RBIs that both came on a two-run home run in the first inning off **Walt Masterson**, a blast that also scored a fellow future Hall of Famer, **Richie Ashburn**.

Arraez singled off **Nathan Evoldi**, first hit by an All-Star with an average that high since **Nomar Garciaparra** (.389 at the time) lined a single off **Trevor Hoffman** in the ninth inning of the 2000 game. His second hit came off Seattle's **George Kirby**, a man who had just launched seven straight fastballs at 98 mph or harder.

Adolis García was named to the AL All-Star starting lineup to replace the injured **Mike Trout**, giving the Rangers five starters for Tuesday's game. They're the fifth team in history to have five starters, and the first to do so since the 1976 Reds.

How long had it been since the National League won an All-Star Game before this one? So long ago (2012) that all these men played in that game:

Paul Konerko ... Josh Hamilton ... Adam Dunn ... Billy Butler ... Matt Harrison ... Bryan LaHair ... and Jered Weaver.

That was 2012. Since then, the American League had won nine in a row. And if the AL had just hung on in this one, it would have been its second 10-game All-Star winning streak *just since 1997*. The AL won 12 in a row from 1997-2009 (with that infamous 2002 tie in the middle somewhere). So over the previous 25 All-Star games, the AL was an incredible 21-3, with one tie.

Over those past nine years, the NL had led for a *total* of four innings. And even now, you can only make that six innings — over an entire decade.

Oh, and one more thing: The only NL player who played in both this game and that 2012 game? **Craig Kimbrel**.

The NL had no center fielders on the roster. So once **Mookie Betts** left the game in the fifth, **Nick Castellanos** trotted out to center — and, amazingly, finished the game there. He had some dreams of making a **Torii Hunter**-type Web Gem, but wound up having no fly balls hit to him. Nevertheless, he was as stoked by his center-field debut as you'd imagine.

In answer to your questions, he had never played a single game in center field in any professional game in his career. But that's just the half of it, he revealed.

"I never played there in my whole life," he said. "I've never played a single game in center — not even in T-ball."

But now that he's played an All-Star Game in center, just like **Willie Mays**.

Craig Kimbrel's first save in an All-Star Game ... 14 seasons ... 408 saves ... 748 regular-season trips to the mound. And then ...

He wound up saving *this* game, for a team that only added him to the roster last weekend. It took him 30 pitches to nail down the win (including two walks). Out of those 408 regular-season saves in Kimbrel's career he needed 30 pitches to get 3 outs in just two of them.

Total All-Star Game activity by Yankees, Mets and Red Sox: one inning from **Gerrit Cole**, one batter from **Kenley Jansen** and two hitless at bats from **Pete Alonso**.

The game had some moments, but none of them were bigger than the bottom of the ninth inning with two outs. With the National League leading 3-2, **Craig Kimbrel** had just walked Kyle Tucker to get to the hometown hero, **Julio Rodríguez**. With the crowd chanting “*Ju-li-ohhhh, Ju-li-ohhhh*” Rodríguez worked a full count, then fouled off a 95 mph fastball before taking the seventh pitch of the at-bat.

Low and outside. A walk.

The crowd dutifully cheered, but while it did extend the game, it was a *little* bit of a letdown. It appeared that baseball had teased a moment for the ages. Rodríguez — who had broken a record by hitting 41 home runs in the first round of the home run derby the night before — seemed destined to walk it off, didn’t he?

Meanwhile, fan chants played a big part in the festivities. During **Shohei Ohtani**’s first at-bat, fans chanted “COME TO SEATTLE.” Later, In the fifth inning, as A’s All-Star **Brent Rooker** stepped to the plate, the sold-out crowd chanted “SELL THE TEAM” — a message to A’s owner John Fisher.

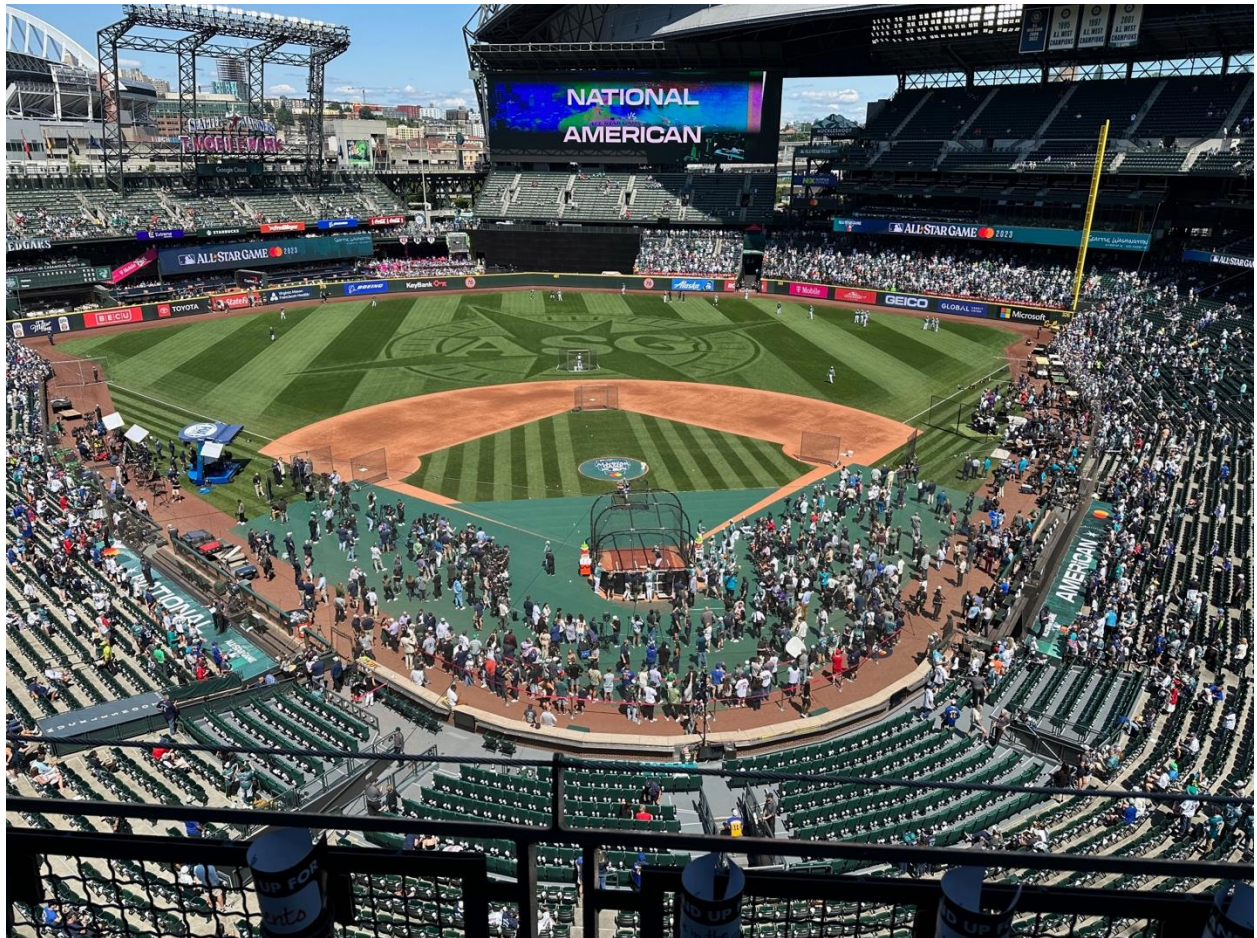
Classy Move -- four former Mariners -- **Edgar Martinez, Ken Griffey Jr., Dan Wilson and Jay Buhner** -- participated in the ceremonial first pitches. Martinez, who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2019, threw out his first pitch to Wilson, a Mariners catcher from 1994-’05. Griffey, one of the true legends of baseball, fired a first pitch to Buhner, a Mariner from 1988-2001. But where was **Ichiro**?

In the top of the second inning, the Rangers took the spotlight with **Nathan Eovaldi** on the mound. Eovaldi, an All-Star in his first year with Texas, was throwing to first-time All-Star **Jonah Heim** behind the plate. Playing behind Eovaldi were **Corey Seager** (shortstop), **Marcus Semien** (second base), **Josh Jung** (third base) and **Adolis García** (right field). It was the first time since the 1951 Dodgers that six teammates were on the field at the same time in an All-Star Game. It was first done by the 1939 Yankees.

injuries to **Aaron Judge, Mike Trout, Yordan Alvarez and Clayton Kershaw**, the game losy some serious star power. A total of 13 All-Stars withdrew for one reason or another.

Most multi-hit All-Star Games--**Willie Mays** with 6.

From our Mariner's season tickets subscriber pictures from the All-Star festivities. (thanks Jeff).



What you don't see on TV prior to the All-Star Game.



Clayton Kershaw and children having some family time before the Home Run Derby. Surprisingly, no line drives clobbered any player kids during the competition. One of the Boys/Girls Club kids shagging flies in left field was flattened by a 115 MPH liner (from Vladdy, I think). They hauled the kid out and the competition continued.

LONGER READS

STAN MUSIAL: STAN THE SAILOR MAN

(subscriber submission of the week-thanks Bob).

He was the hottest young player on the Cardinals when duty called. Playing ball in the Navy taught Stan a few new skills that would elevate his game to the Hall of Fame level...

Gary Cieradowski

infinitecardset@substack.com

HE WAS THE budding superstar of the early 1940's. On a St. Louis Cardinals team that was loaded with talent, young Stan Musial stood out. Unlike his tough and rough teammates like **Whitey Kurowski or Enos Slaughter**, Musial was a quiet, friendly fella. When radio announcers pronounced his Polish last name wrong, Stan was too nice of a guy to bring it to their attention. Thus, Musial (pronounced "Mu-show") became Musial (pronounced "Mew-see-al").

He seemed to have come out of nowhere – a converted pitcher from the sticks of Pennsylvania who hit .315 and quietly took his place in the starting lineup of the best team in the National League. It was while he was still relatively unknown that Stan got his famous nickname. The Brooklyn fans in the Ebbets Field stands didn't know who this new Cardinal player was, but it seemed that every time "that man" came to the plate, he tore Dodger pitching apart. Eventually, as more and more singles, doubles and homers flew off the end of his bat, "that man" evolved into a more reverent "The Man" – the name Stan Musial was forever known by.

That 1942 rookie season was just a teaser – in '43 he led the league in hits, doubles, triples, batting average, slugging percentage – being named the National League MVP was just a formality. 1944 was pretty much a repeat of the previous year, and for the third year in a row the Cardinals went to the World Series. But there was that thing called World War II going on, and it was inevitable that The Man would have to take part. Brooklyn's **Pete Reiser** pushed hard to get Stan to join the Army and play on his Fort Riley ball club, but Musial went Navy instead.

SEAMAN STAN MUSIAL was posted to Bainbridge Naval Training Center in Maryland. During the war, all military bases had football, basketball and baseball teams to keep the servicemen occupied and out of trouble. Team sports helped build an esprit de corps among the recruits, and many of the larger bases fielded teams loaded with former big leaguers. Teams like the Bainbridge Commodores, which Musial played for, would play exhibition games against major league teams and local semi-pro outfits for the benefit of the boys. Free admission to see Bainbridge face the Philadelphia Athletics or Brooklyn Dodgers kept many a sailor out of trouble for the afternoon and helped take his mind off of what was to come when he inevitably shipped overseas.

The Bainbridge team was coached by the base's athletic officer, Lieutenant Jerry O'Brien, and boasted some first-rate talent. Besides Musial, the Commodores had big leaguers **Lum Harris** (A's), Dick Wakefield (Tigers), **Thurman Tucker** (White Sox), **Stan Spence** (Senators) and **Dick Sisler** (Cardinals). Wearing the Navy-issued number 44 on his back instead of his familiar 6 and swinging a GI model Hanna Batrite in place of his Louisville Slugger, Musial and the Commodores opened their 1945 season with a game against the New York Giants. The pros were winning going into the 9th when The Man tied it up, where it remained when the game was called after nine innings. Next, Musial and the Navy boys whipped the Phillies and then took a pair from the Senators, Stan's bat coming through in the clutch time after time.

Stan also had to get used to the Navy's strict rank system in which subordinates were expected to follow a superior's orders unquestioningly. While this made perfect sense on a battlefield, it was sometimes a little hard for an experienced pro like Musial to blindly follow Lt. O'Brien's instructions on the diamond. For instance, although the Cardinal Stan Musial was exclusively an outfielder in the majors, Lt. O'Brien decided that Seaman Musial would be more valuable to the Navy as a first baseman. As would be expected, Musial was not very good at the unfamiliar position, with Lt. O'Brien assessing his abilities as "terrible." Musial responded by working overtime and quickly mastered the new position. Years later, Stan's ability to easily switch between outfield and first base would double his value to the Cardinals.

When not undergoing recruit training or playing ball, Stan spent his time talking baseball and autographing his fellow sailor's white hats. Though Musial was no doubt the star attraction of the Bainbridge team, Stan was astute enough to see that while the sailors appreciated the

doubles and triples that sprung off the end of his bat, the swabbies REALLY loved the booming homers that his teammate Dick Sisler pounded out.

EVER THE NICE GUY, The Man decided that he would give the Navy boys what they wanted: home runs. The Man began tinkering with his swing and changing his grip on the bat. By the time he shipped out to the Pacific in June, The Man had begun evolving from a great hitter into a power hitter.

In Hawaii, Stan was assigned to the Ship Repair Unit in Pearl Harbor, where he spent mornings sailing a motor launch between the docks and the warships being repaired in the harbor. In the afternoon he played baseball. In the spring of 1945 the islands were an arsenal of talent, and it can be argued that the level of ball being played on any given weekend in Hawaii was better than what was being offered by the Major Leagues back in the States.

With so many ex-big leaguers in their ranks, the Navy formed the Fourteenth Naval District League that consisted of ten teams playing a 54 game schedule. Teams regularly played before crowds of 10,000 or more sailors and marines. Musial joined his old Bainbridge teammate Lum Harris on the Ship Repair Unit club which was managed by former Dodger **Cookie Lavagetto** and included **Ray Lamanno and Wes Livengood** of the Cincinnati Reds. Though the Ship Repair team failed to make the playoffs, Musial's .380 batting average was third best in the league and was named to the all-star team.

During his time in Hawaii, The Man also got a chance to relive his former glory days as a pitcher; his 4-hit shutout of an army all-star team showed he still had something on the ball.

At the conclusion of the season, the Navy floated the idea of an Army-Navy World Series, but the doughboys demurred as they did not have anywhere near the diamond star power in the islands as the bluejackets. With the prospect of an inter-service series slashed, the Navy decided to split their big league talent into two teams representing the American and National Leagues for a Navy World Series.

The talent present on each of the teams was staggering, with **Ted Williams, Johnny Pesky, Schoolboy Rowe, Bob Lemon and Dick Wakefield** for the AL and Musial, **Billy Herman, Hugh Casey, Herman Franks** and Cookie Lavagetto representing the NL. Held from September 26 to

October 6, 1945, each game pulled crowds of around 28,000. The National League prevailed 4 games to 2, with Musial demonstrating his slugging prowess by hitting a home run in Game 1.

With the war over, Stan was shipped to the Philadelphia Navy Yard. His lack of any training whatsoever notwithstanding, the brass expected Seaman Musial to take part in the dismantling of a destroyer. Fortunately, someone up the ladder came to their senses, and Stan was discharged just in time to join the Cardinals in spring training.

WHILE OTHER players' careers had suffered after several years away, playing Navy ball for 18 months made The Man even more dangerous than before. He led the National League in all the same offensive categories that he did in 1943, his new-found power winning him his second NL MVP Award and helping the Cards win the 1946 World Championship. Two years later he came one home run-shy of winning the Triple Crown, but settled for his third NL MVP Award – the first player in his league to do so.

Besides being arguably the best hitter of all-time, Stan's sense of sportsmanship earned him the respect of millions of fans. When the game was integrated in 1947, Stan showed support in his typically quiet way that spoke volumes. In a 1947 Dodgers-Cards game, Stan's teammate Enos Slaughter deliberately spiked **Jackie Robinson** in a dirty play at first. The next inning when Robinson reached first base, he was seething mad and told Musial he wanted to tear his Cardinals teammates apart. Stan's reply of "I don't blame you" diffused the situation, making Robinson realize that he was not fighting the entire world, just a few ignorant bigots.

Willie Mays remembered The Man joining in a card game with Black players during a plane flight heading to an All-Star Game. "That told me how classy he was, and I never forgot that," Mays later recalled.

After he retired in '63, The Man held various front office jobs with the Cards including General Manager of the team when they won the World Series in 1967. He headed up Lyndon Johnson's physical education taskforce in the late sixties and led by example when he became one of the first athletes to turn down lucrative tobacco ad endorsements.

Stan was the ultimate family man, and to help other players achieve what he held so dear, had the Cards organize a babysitting service so wives could attend their husband's games. An

accomplished harmonica player, Musial's rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" was a fixture at old-timers events and he even published a book about mastering the mouth organ. If one was to venture to the city of Kutno in the dead-center of Poland, you'll find Stan Musial Field, part of a sprawling baseball complex that serves as HQ to European youth baseball.

BOB COSTAS has always possessed the talent of crafting the perfect one-paragraph synopsis that rides that fine line between sentimentality and true fact, and his summation of The Man is the perfect example with which to close this story:

He didn't hit a homer in his last at-bat; he hit a single. He didn't hit in 56 straight games. He married his high school sweetheart and stayed married to her. ... All Musial represents is more than two decades of sustained excellence and complete decency as a human being.

NOSTALGIC ALLURE OF 'IMMACULATE GRID' MAKES OBSESSIVES OF MLB PLAYERS, FANS



C. Trent Rosecrans, The Athletic

Brian Minter created Immaculate Grid, and even he didn't get an immaculate score the first time he played.

The tweet is still there, even if the actual puzzle is lost to the internet:

Having claimed both the URL and the Twitter handle of ImmaculateGrid, the 29-year-old Atlanta-area software developer tweeted out his results in the automated game he created. He got eight out of nine correct.

"The first one doesn't exist anywhere," Minter said Tuesday, the day it was announced that he'd sold his game to Sports Reference LLC, the parent company of Baseball-Reference.com.

The game officially launched on April 4, the sixth day of this baseball season. Minter made the game to test out some new technology he was playing with. He'd seen grid games online and decided to try his hand at one.

Like Wordle or Sudoku for baseball fans, the grid has three rows and three columns. Each row and column has an MLB team logo or a statistic or award. Players have to fill in each box with a player who fits both categories, having played for both teams, reached a statistical milestone or won an award.

"I think what makes it so perfect is because of the format, it gives it such great variance in difficulty because it gives something for everybody," said Jordan Shusterman, half of the Twitter team Céspedes Family Barbecue and a writer for Fox Sports. "The casual fan can do it and it can indulge the ultimate dorkiness that is internet baseball fandom in 2023."

In the testing phase, Minter had only teams as a category until his younger brother, Steven, suggested statistical achievements and awards.

For a while, the grid was automated, but Minter found that it would repeat categories, so he now creates each grid "by hand" so that there aren't repeats.

Creating the grid means he doesn't actually play any longer, but he does love hearing from his brother, father and father-in-law when they have a particularly random player used on the grid.

"(It) allows us to indulge in a bit of nostalgia about the players we grew up watching or the baseball cards we collected," Minter said. "And there's a little bit of pride in that when you're able to recall that. And so I think that's kind of the magic sauce of it."

Sean Forman, president of Sports Reference LLC, was particularly proud of a recent use of **Scott Leius**, an infielder who had played for both Cleveland and Kansas City in the 1990s.

You'd assume Forman, who created Baseball-Reference.com, would be a ringer in the game. The Scott Leius pull aside, Forman said he's probably better than average, but not exceptional.

"I hope I'm better than average, but I feel like over the years I've downloaded a lot of my baseball memory into the site," Forman said. "I've let go of a lot of the information that I might have kept a little closer, knowing that I can find it whenever I need it."

Immaculate Grid can now be found on Forman's website. Tuesday was the first day that Minter released two grids — the first in the morning, as usual, and the second coinciding with the press release announcing that he'd sold the game to Forman's company.

For now, Minter will continue to make the grids by hand, but doesn't have a long-term plan for his involvement.

Forman, though, does. He wants to expand the game into other sports, including football, basketball and soccer. It fits right in with the nature of the sports reference websites. Minter may even get to play. The Georgia Tech graduate said his football knowledge is probably his strongest after baseball, but it's a distant second in his fandom.

While the first grid isn't available online, the second is. Right there in the Twitter feed is Grid No. 2, with Yankees and Nationals (you can count Yankees manager **Aaron Boone**, an Immaculate Grid player, as a correct answer.)

While the game first launched in April, it was mostly for Minter and his friends. He remembers the May 15 tweet of the day's statistics that had 10 players.

That's about where he thought it would stay, until one of his brother's friends put the game on Reddit. The site got more traffic. It truly exploded in the internet baseball world after the Twitter account @FoolishBB shared it on June 13. Minter really knew he had something when one of his favorite podcasts, "Baseball Bar-B-Cast," hosted by Shusterman and his partner Jake Mintz, mentioned his game.

"The key to good trivia, for people who aren't going on Jeopardy!, is that it's not too easy or too hard," Shusterman said. "This is perfect. You can both remember some guys and find out who had 200 hits in a season."

Boone said on the "Talkin' Yanks" podcast that the Yankees clubhouse was obsessed with the game, as was he.

Boone discussed not just getting all nine boxes filled on nine guesses (it is an "immaculate" grid, after all, and an immaculate inning is striking out the side on nine pitches), but then graduating on to the rarity score.

That rarity score is part of the evolution of the game. At first, scoring was simple: how many you got right in the nine guesses. After that came the individual rarity scores, with each guess revealing just how popular your answer was with all players. That led to the total rarity score, adding up the percentages of each guess, which can now be shared on Twitter.

That rarity score came out of the way fans played the game; it was the users, not Minter, who were finding ways to compete beyond the basics. Still, you can play the game however you like. The rarity score just offers more of a challenge.

This fits, as Shusterman noted, both the casual players and the dorkiest of the baseball dorks who remember **Steve Farr**'s baseball card with Cleveland and then the disappointment of seeing a Royals card emerge from a pack only to find out it was Farr, a journeyman reliever, and not **George Brett**. But at least, 38 years later, Farr comes in handy (for reference, he also played for the Yankees and Red Sox. You're welcome.)

Now that it's part of Baseball-Reference, the first addition to the game was a link to all possible answers, made possible thanks to the website's infrastructure.

Forman was at last week's Society for American Baseball Research Convention in Chicago, and Immaculate Grid bragging was in full force. Although Tuesday's announcement was already in the works, he couldn't talk about it yet.

One of Forman's friends, Chris Jaffe, had an ace up his sleeve, knowing the **Matt Stairs** played for all four of the 1969 expansion franchises, so he was just waiting to use Stairs for the Royals, Padres, Nationals (Expos count, and Stairs played for both the Expos and Nationals) or Brewers (Seattle Pilots). Stairs played for 12 different organizations in total. So, Forman said, he's been thinking about memorizing all the teams of **Edwin Jackson or Octavio Dotel**, as kind of a chess opening move or Wordle starter word. Jackson played for a record 14 teams, breaking Dotel's record of 13.

(Editor's note: Jackson played for the Rays, Dodgers, Cubs, Nationals, Tigers, White Sox, Diamondbacks, Braves, Cardinals, A's, Padres, Orioles, Marlins and Blue Jays. Dotel played for Astros, A's, Tigers, White Sox, Royals, Mets, Rockies, Pirates, Braves, Cardinals, Dodgers, Yankees and Blue Jays.)

The ability to set your own definition of a win is part of the appeal, as is the social aspect, like Wordle before it. Forman plans on monetizing the game by putting an ad on the page. He's also seen an uptick in traffic on certain days, as players research answers or simply remember some guys as a result of playing. Subscribers may get access to older puzzles.

There shouldn't be too many changes, Forman said, because the game stands on its own. While there are those on Twitter bragging about their rarity scores of 1 or 2, Forman said nine-of-nine is where he finds his satisfaction.

"To be honest with you, it's enough of a struggle for me that I'm mostly happy to get it correct every day," Forman said. "But being my age, the rarity score comes on its own for free."

(and from Sports Illustrated)

A new feature that the game just added makes it even easier to look for other possible answers. Immaculate Grid was acquired by Sports Reference, it announced Tuesday, and now includes integration with Baseball Reference that allows users to click through to a full list of possible answers on the Baseball Reference site after completing the grid.

Knowing all possible answers makes the game so much more enjoyable. The central appeal of Immaculate Grid is the enduring joy of Remembering Some Guys, and now Immaculate Grid gives you the full list of guys you could have remembered. Without that helpful link, how else

would I have known that **Travis D'Arnaud** played one game for the Dodgers after being released by the Mets in 2019, or that longtime Astros third baseman **Morgan Ensberg** closed out his career with 28 unremarkable games with the Yankees in '08? It's also a nice confidence boost to know that you were able to successfully name one of just 90 players who played for both the Dodgers and Astros, or one of only 14 Yankees who picked up 200 hits in a season. It's a sports nerd's dream.

FIRST HE WAS PERFECT, AND THEN THINGS GOT INTERESTING

Benjamin Hoffman, The New York Times

Having thrown baseball's second perfect game keeps **John Ward**'s name alive. But the pitcher, shortstop, golfer, lawyer, activist and author was decades ahead of his time.



A cigarette card in 1888 featured John Montgomery Ward recreating one of the 111 stolen bases he had in the previous season. Eight years earlier, he had thrown a perfect game. Credit...Goodwin & Co., via Library of Congress

Any time a pitcher throws a perfect game, as Domingo Germán of the Yankees did on Wednesday, the list of previous pitchers who performed the feat is trotted out. The names are famous (**Sandy Koufax! Cy Young!**) and decidedly less famous (**Dallas Braden?**).

At the top of that list, and fairly easy to scroll past, are a pair of names separated from the others by nearly 25 years — and huge differences in game play.

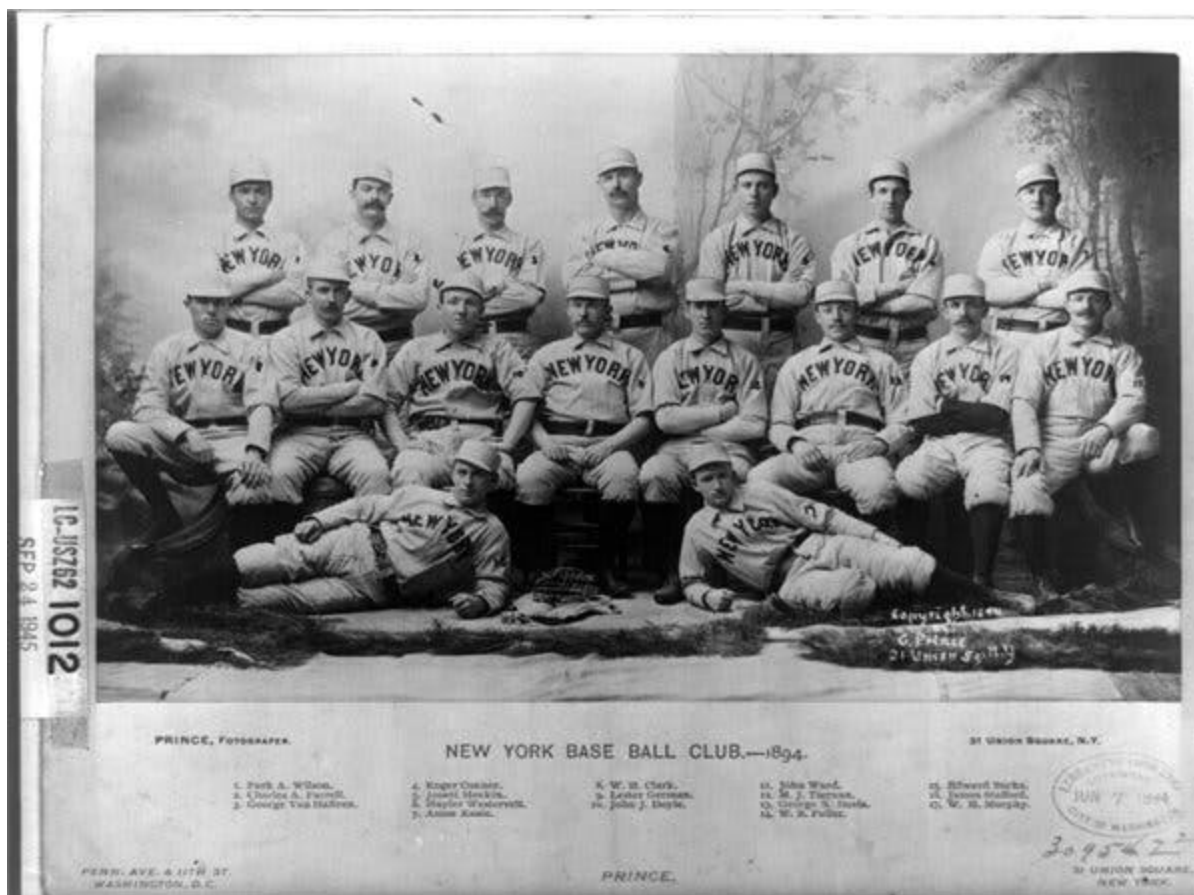
1. **Lee Richmond**, Worcester, 6/12/1880
2. **John Ward**, Providence, 6/17/1880

Beyond the list of perfect games, their names aren't familiar to modern audiences. Even their clubs are defunct. In some ways it can seem as if they exist solely to be credited for having pioneered a feat that remains decidedly rare to this day. And occasionally they do not even get that, as many news outlets limit their lists to baseball's so-called modern era, which began in 1901.

Richmond at least gets the distinction of being first, and his perfect game against the Cleveland Blues was easily the highlight of his sporting career. But if you take the time to learn about Ward, who matched Richmond's perfection in a game against the Buffalo Bisons five days later, you will find that retiring all 27 batters he faced on a Thursday afternoon at Messer Street Grounds in Providence, R.I., was just one line on a résumé that could make even **Shohei Ohtani**, the two-way superstar of the Los Angeles Angels, blush.

Ohtani's ability to pitch and hit is awe-inspiring, but Ward, who was born in 1860 and was known by many as Monte for his middle name, Montgomery, did even more. He pitched a perfect game, won a National League E.R.A. title, collected 164 wins as a pitcher and 2,107 hits as a position player, had a 111-steal season, became a lawyer, organized a union, formed his own professional league and, just for fun, developed such a strong golf game that he finished second in a prestigious tournament.

"With Ward, it's hard to stop writing superlatives!" said David Stevens, author of "Baseball's Radical for All Seasons: A Biography of John Montgomery Ward."



Ward, who took the center spot for a team photo of the New York Giants in 1894, led that club to championships in 1888 and 1889. Credit...George Prince, via Library of Congress

Pitching and playing the field was more common in the 19th century, but John Thorn, the official historian for Major League Baseball, said in an email that Ward had stood out even among his peers — and not just for his playing.

“Versatility was indeed more common in professional baseball’s early years,” Thorn said. “But Ward was uncommonly proficient as a pitcher, as an infielder-outfielder and as an author. Unlike the ghosted biographies of figures like **King Kelly** or **Cap Anson**, Ward was a college graduate and attorney who actually wrote, in 1889, ‘Base-Ball: How to Become a Player,’ with a fine historical section.”

Ward left his own accomplishments out of his book — which, according to Stevens, included being able to play as a fielder using either arm to throw — but even the short version of his career paints a picture of a player so outstanding that it is shocking his name isn’t better known.

A standout pitcher for Providence in his early years, Ward played the outfield and then shortstop for the New York Giants after sustaining an arm injury, helping lead that team to two championships. As Thorn once wrote, “Long before **Reggie Jackson**, he was New York’s Mr. October.”

Ward was a huge star of his era, and he set himself apart further by understanding the value of that stardom. He helped form a players’ union in the National League and later broke from the N.L. entirely to form the Players’ League, an N.L. rival that was so far ahead of its time it had a revenue-sharing system for its owners and did not have a reserve clause binding players to teams.

His league ultimately failed, but Ward kept moving, serving as a manager of several N.L. clubs and as a team president for the Boston Braves before traveling the world to compete in top amateur golf competitions. In 1903, he finished second at the prestigious North and South Amateur at Pinehurst in North Carolina. The New York Times provided daily coverage of the tournament, including praise of Ward’s efforts in the final round, but did not even mention his baseball career.

That type of snub would only continue.

With a career that nearly anyone would envy, he wasn’t inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame until 1964, nearly 40 years after he died. And even upon receiving that honor from the old-timer’s committee, he went mostly overlooked: The headline the next day in The New York Times named the other four players the committee had chosen, mentioning Ward only in the final two paragraphs of the story.

“Nineteenth-century worthies were largely overlooked after Anson, Kelly and Ewing got in,” Thorn said of Ward’s long wait. “One-time ‘immortals’ were consigned to the dustbin.”

Stevens said Ward’s personality had played a role in his being written out of history.

“His progressive efforts always limited his success in staying in the game he loved,” Stevens said, citing Ward’s having challenged the Spalding Committee’s assertion that Abner Doubleday invented the game as a thorny issue that rankled the establishment.

Ward’s liberal politics, which included pushing for the inclusion of Black, Hispanic and Native American players, may have influenced opinions as well.

With a legacy so heavy on innovation and so filled with progressive ideas, it should come as no surprise that Ward had thoughts on how to build the sport — still hyphenated as base-ball at the time — into something even bigger and better.

One of the ideas he presented in his book, which is still in print thanks to the Society for American Baseball Research, continues to resonate when you consider that baseball’s biggest

issues are its aging fan base and the fact that many of the best athletes in the United States choose to play other sports.

As Ward eloquently wrote:

“The only thing now lacking to forever establish base-ball as our national sport is a more liberal encouragement of the amateur element. Professional base-ball may have its ups and downs according as its directors may be wise or the contrary, but the foundation upon which it all is built, its hold upon the future, is in the amateur enthusiasm for the game. The professional game must always be confined to the larger towns, but every hamlet may have its amateur team, and let us see to it that their games are encouraged.”

THIS WEEK’S TRIVIA CHALLENGE ANSWERS

Whose record for the number of home runs in a year that didn’t lead the majors did **Ken Griffey Jr.** break in 1997?

No other player has hit more walk-off home runs.

He retired with over 500 HRs, 2400 hit and 1500 RBI.

He was 3x MVP but not in the season that his 54 HRs didn’t lead the majors (or his league).

Hall of Famer. Played his whole career for an AL team.

MICKEY MANTLE

Mantle hit 54 behind **Roger Maris’** 61 HR in 1961. Griffey hit 56 in the AL in 1997, but **Mark McGwire** led the majors that year with 58—34 with OAK and 24 with STL.

Mantle, **Jim Thome & Stan Musial** are tied with 13 walk-off career dingers apiece. One of Mantle’s was in the postseason (3-Oct-1964) & one of Musial’s in an All-Star Game (12-July-1955). All thirteen of Thome’s were hit in regular-season games.

In the Expansion Era (since 1961), who had more years between his first and second Most Valuable Player awards than any other American League player?

He won in 1983 and 1991.

Right-handed infielder.

One season, he played ninety-five games and didn't make a single error.

He was the first player to win the All-Star MVP award and the All-Star Home Run Derby held a day earlier.

Hall of Famer.

CAL RIPKEN JR.

Won MVPs in 1983 & 1991, an 8-year difference. **Lou Gehrig** with 12 years between 1924 & 1936 is the AL record.

In 1990, Ripken made no errors in the course of 95 regular season games totaling 431 chances, both major league records for shortstops. Cal's record fell to a teammate, **Mike Bordick** with 110 errorless games & 543 chances set in 2002. Despite Ripken's prowess with the glove, the AL Gold Glove for that season went to **Ozzie Guillen** who had 17 errors in 743 chances even though Cal's had just 3 miscues, total, in 680 chances.

In 1991 in Toronto, Cal dominated the break.

Who is the only pitcher to give up two hundred home runs in the American League and two hundred home runs in the National League?

He struck out all the Alou brothers (Not in the same game—that would be a record!)

His career strikeouts numbers more than three thousand while the number of career bases-on-balls he gave up is fewer than one thousand.

He won a Cy Young in 1971, finished top three 4 other times.

Hall of Fame right hander, he led the majors in complete games 4 x on his way to 284 career wins, 3192 strikeouts.

He never pitched in the post-season.

FERGIE JENKINS

Surrendered 273 HR in the NL & 211 in the AL.

He K'd Felipe Alou 9 X; Matty Alou 14 X; & Jesus Alou 5 X. He also surrendered HRs to all 3, the only pitcher to do that.

Lifetime Ks = 3,192; career BB = 997.

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