

THE LONG SEASON: THE HISTORICAL RECORD

Part of what makes baseball special is its long season. It's been said that baseball isn't a sprint, but a marathon, and the historical record bears this out. Having to play nearly every day for six months or more affects everything about the game. A manager's strategy can change completely between March and October, given injuries, trades, predictable and not-so-predictable changes in player performance, and the capricious nature of rookies. A season that, at times, seems endless works its charms and wreaks havoc concurrently in many different ways. The best teams of all time still lose series during the season, and even the worst teams fashion together some form of a winning streak.

The long season is a player's chance to make or break his career. It gives a manager the option of sticking with a declining veteran until he rebounds—or until his poor performance sinks the team. After more than 100 games and four months of play, a team can sometimes pull a pennant out of its cap by promoting an untested but promising rookie. The guy who hits .375 in April may hit .130 in May and end up back in the minors, or a Hurricane Hazle can hit .403 down the stretch to win a pennant—and never be seen again.

When pitcher Jim Brosnan penned his 1959 diary, *The Long Season*, one thing he communicated expertly was the way baseball's fortunes could turn 360 degrees within those six months: from despair to ecstasy, with a whole lot of excitement and some stultifying ennui in between. That's how baseball has been for every one of its long seasons dating back to the nineteenth century: a roller-coaster ride of great stories buried inside a simple yet puzzling game that seems, to outsiders and other unfortunates, almost impenetrable.

For those of us who don't get to play the game for half a year at a time, baseball's long season provides artistic, scientific, emotional, and even spiritual fulfillment, and its memories keep us warm through many a long winter. A distillation of more than a century of baseball seasons is presented in this section—to learn about, argue about, and to savor—from team records to top individual performances, using both traditional statistics and new methods of measurement.

Needless to say, condensing the events of a baseball season into a single page is a very difficult task. Nevertheless, the format of this Historical Record section attempts to do justice to each of the 254 pennant races since 1871 in a concise manner, from the erratic and incomplete campaigns of the National Association, the original professional league; to the ill-conceived single season of the ill-fated Union Association in 1884; to the 130-year span of the National League, now in its third century of competition.

The top part of each Historical Record page includes final standings for the league along with extensive team batting, baserunning, pitching, and fielding statistics. Alongside the standings are each team's home wins and losses, allowing an examination of how each club fared in its home park as well as on the road. Separate park factors are listed for both batters and pitchers, showing how much each team's home field helped or hurt offensively and defensively. Note that these park factors are not simply the inverse of each other, as the calculations for each are related but not exactly the same.

Most of the team stats categories are also represented in the Batter and Pitcher Registers, though a few different stats of relevance at a team level are also included (e.g., Games in Relief). Because the official records were not as extensive, some categories will be blank for part or all of the nineteenth century (e.g., Hit Batsmen and Sacrifice Hits); others will also be blank for part of the first half of the twentieth century (e.g., Caught Stealing).

Below the standings and team statistics are individual league-leaders in 35 categories of batting, pitching, and fielding stats. Each category lists the top five players (unless multiple tied players would lengthen the list past the top five). The first and last categories—Batter-Fielder Wins and Pitcher Wins—are in boldface to indicate their importance.

Among the batting and pitching leaders, the minimums for qualifying as a league leader for any average or rate statistics are normally the same as qualifying for the batting or ERA titles. However, the minimum for qualifying as a league leader in Base Runners per 9 Innings was deliberately set low enough to include relief pitchers (60 innings pitched). Relief pitchers are unlikely to qualify for the league-leaders in many other pitching categories, such as Opponents' Average and Opponents OBP, as a result of the higher innings pitched requirements. The relief pitching categories (starting with Games and ending with Relief Ranking) have been grouped together for ease of comparison.

One category of team pitching stats is completely new: WPB. This represents the sum of wild pitches and passed balls—at a team level, there is no difference between them.

At the bottom of each page is a 300–350 word essay that gives a snapshot of what it was like to be a baseball fan that season. Each page in the Historical Record includes a summary of the pennant race and the postseason, along

with comments about the level of scoring and why it might have increased or decreased. If attendance went up or down substantially, it will also be noted. The effects of major off-field events like wars, strikes, and lockouts are also briefly summarized.

Each yearly essay notes the comings and goings of the greatest players in the game's history, as well as some of its lesser lights. The debut or rookie seasons for standout players who would influence the course of the game for a decade or more are also shown, along with the final years of those stalwarts headed into retirement. Untimely deaths are listed along with the passing of those ballplayers who defined their eras: When a man of the stature of Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, or Ted Williams passes from the scene, the game is changed in invisible—yet very real—ways.

The lists below show all abbreviations used in the Historical Record section. Those that have not been defined elsewhere are explained here. Further information about the formulas and computations used can also be found in the Glossary.

TEAM AND LEAGUE BATTING AND BASESTEALING

W: Wins

L: Losses

T: Ties. Ties only happen if the game has completed 5 or more full innings, the game was tied after the last completed inning, and no further runs have been scored unless the home team has gone ahead in the bottom of the current inning.

PC: Winning Percentage. Calculated by dividing the number of wins by the number of wins and losses.

GB: Games Behind. The number of games behind first place. If the team in question finished 83-79 and the team in first place finished 95-66, the team in question finished 12.5 games behind.

HW: Home Wins.

HL: Home Losses.

R: Runs.

OR: Opponent Runs.

PA: Plate Appearances.

H: Hits.

2B: Doubles.

3B: Triples.

HR: Home Runs.

BB: Bases on Balls. Generally referred to today as walks.

SO: Strikeouts.

HB: Hit Batsmen.

SH: Sacrifice Hits. Sacrifice flies were counted as sacrifice hits from 1908–1930 and in 1939.

AVG: Batting Average. Hits divided by at bats.

OBP: On-Base Percentage. Hits plus walks plus hit-by-pitch divided by at-bats plus walks plus hit-by-pitch plus sacrifice flies: $(H+BB+HBP) / (AB+BB+HBP+SF)$. Sacrifice flies (SF) were not used in the OBP calculation for 1908–30 and 1939 since they were combined with sacrifice bunts in the official stats.

SLG: Slugging Average. Total bases divided by at bats.

OPS: On-Base Percentage plus Slugging Average. The figure is multiplied by 1000, so .320 plus .500 would be 820.

AOPS: Adjusted On-Base plus Slugging. On-base percentage and slugging average are added and normalized for the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park(s) and then converted to a scale in which 100 is average.

BR: Batting Runs. The number of runs the team should have scored compared to the average team based on the team's offensive production.

ABR: Adjusted Batting Runs. Batting runs adjusted for the home park and the league average offensive level but ignoring the offensive contributions of pitchers. The entire league average batting stats are used for teams, since teams either have pitcher batting or they don't, depending on the league rules. For individual batters, BR, ABR, and AOPS are calculated using league figures with pitcher batting subtracted. Thus the team definition is slightly different from the player definition.

PF: Hitters' Park Factor. This measure of how the team's home park affects offense is used to adjust the team's raw offensive performance in a way that takes into account the context of the team's home park. This also includes a correction for not having to face your own pitchers, which ends up being used in AOPS and ABR.

SB: Stolen Bases. Totals are available for all seasons in all leagues from 1886 on, as well as for all the seasons of the National Association.

CS: Caught Stealing. These totals are available for all American League teams in 1914–15 and from 1920 on; caught stealing totals are available for all National League teams in 1913, 1915, from 1920–26, and from 1951 on.

BSA: Basestealing Average. Stolen bases divided by stolen bases plus caught stealing; not possible unless caught stealing totals are available.

BSR: Basestealing Runs. The number of runs added by a team's basestealing attempts.

TEAM AND LEAGUE PITCHING AND FIELDING

CG: Complete Games.

SHO: Shutouts.

GR: Games in Relief. The total number of relief appearances made by the team's pitchers.

SV: Saves. Saves became an official statistic in 1969. Saves are calculated based on the official definition of saves at the time. Saves before 1969 are based on how many times a relief pitcher finished pitching a victory for his team without getting a win.

IP: Innings Pitched.

H: Hits Allowed.

HR: Home Runs Allowed.

BB: Bases on Balls Allowed.

SO: Strikeouts.

BR/9: Baserunners Allowed Per 9 Innings.

ERA: Earned Run Average. Calculated by dividing earned runs by innings pitched and multiplying by 9.

AERA: Adjusted Earned Run Average. Calculated by normalizing ERA for the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park(s) and converting to a scale in which 100 is average.

OAV: Opponents' Batting Average. Hits allowed divided by opponent at bats.

OOB: Opponents' On-Base Percentage.

PR: Pitching Runs. Indicates how many runs the team's pitcher allowed to score compared to the average pitcher.

APR: Adjusted Pitching Runs. Indicates how many runs the team's pitcher allowed to score compared to the average pitcher in the context of the team's home park(s) and the offensive level of the league.

PF: Pitchers' Park Factor. This measures how the team's home park affects pitching. It is used to adjust the team's raw pitching performance in a way that takes the context of the team's home park into account. Again, there is a correction for pitchers not having to face their own batters. Park factor is used in the APR and AERA calculation.

OSB: Opponents' Stolen Bases.

OCS: Opponents' Caught Stealing.

FA: Fielding Average. Assists plus putouts divided by assists plus putouts plus errors: $(A+PO/A+PO+E)$.

E: Errors.

WPB: Wild Pitches plus Passed Balls.

DP: Double Plays.

FW: Fielding Wins. Total number of wins the team achieved through its fielding compared to the average team in the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park(s).

PW: Pitching Wins. Total number of wins the team achieved through its pitching compared to the average team in the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park(s).

BW: Batting Wins. The total number of wins the team achieved through its hitting compared to the average team in the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park(s).

BSW: Basestealing Wins. Total number of wins the team achieved through its basestealing compared to the average team in the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park(s).

DIF: Differential. This measures the difference between how many games the team was projected to win based on its hitting, pitching, fielding, and baserunning, and how many games the team actually won. It is measured in the same way as teams measure how many games in the standings they are behind another.

LEADERBOARDS

Not shown among team statistics

BFW: Batter-Fielder Wins. The sum of a player's batting wins, basestealing wins, and fielding wins, this figure indicates how many games the player won or lost for his team compared to an average player.

Total Bases. Calculated by adding singles plus 2x doubles plus 3x triples plus 4x home runs.

RBI: Runs Batted In.

Fielding Runs Infield and Outfield. Fielding Runs measures how many runs the player saves or loses for his team in the field compared to an average fielder. The formula takes into account assists, putouts, errors, and double plays. All of these defensive statistics are adjusted for the context in several different ways. Defensive innings are based on play-by-play from 1969 forward; they are estimated for previous years.

Fewest Bases on Balls Per Game.

Games.

Adjusted Relief Runs. Adjusted Relief Runs indicates how many runs the pitcher allowed to score compared to the average pitcher in the context of the offensive level of the league and the pitcher's home park(s). Relief pitchers are identified as pitchers who averaged less than 3 innings per appearance.

Relief Ranking. Calculated by putting Adjusted Relief Runs into the context of the importance of the relief innings thrown by the relief pitcher while taking into account the number of saves and decisions assigned to the pitcher.

Adjusted Starter Runs. This indicates how many runs the pitcher allowed to score compared to the average pitcher in the context of the offensive level of the league and the pitcher's home park(s). Starting pitchers are identified as pitchers who average at least 3 innings per appearance.

Pitcher Wins. Individual pitcher wins are calculated by adding up pitching, batting, fielding, and basestealing wins for individual pitchers; different from team pitching wins.

