

Rating Starting Pitching Staffs

By Jim Weigand

This paper proposes a method of rating the strengths of starting staffs. The team rating represents the average lifetime pitcher wins per team starts. Each team's pitcher's lifetime wins are multiplied by his season's games started. These products are added. The sum is divided by team's games started. Sandy Koufax started 41 games for the Dodgers in 1966. He has 165 lifetime victories. Those two numbers are multiplied to form a product (6765). Each pitcher's product is added (34121) and then divided by the number of team games started (162). That yields 210.62 lifetime games won per game started for the 1966 Dodgers. The 210.62 rating is the highest of any team between the 1923 Yankees and the 1973 Los Angeles Dodgers. It is ironic that the ace of that staff, Sandy Koufax, brings the team's rating down. However, this method rewards longevity as well as excellence

The highest ranked teams are listed below starting with 1876-1899 and 1900-1919. Starting staffs with smaller then, which skews the numbers. For example, the 1881 Troy Trojans had just two starting pitchers: Tim Keefe (45 GS – 342 W) and Mickey Welch (40 GS – 307 W).

1876-1899				1900-1919			
Year	Team	GS	W	Year	Team	GS	W
1881	Tro-N	85	325.53	1902	Bos-A	138	245.22
1886	NY-N	124	322.65	1904	NY-N	157	234.17
1893	Cle-N	129	310.93	1904	Bos-A	157	227.80
1879	Buf-N	79	305.91	1903	NY-N	142	226.91
1885	NY-N	112	296.46	1905	NY-N	155	223.98
1876	NY-N	57	293.35	1906	NY-N	152	220.44
1880	Tro-N	83	292.93	1900	SL-N	141	220.16
1883	Buf-N	98	289.60	1901	Bos-N	140	218.37
1882	Tro-N	85	288.65	1908	NY-N	157	214.96
1894	Cle-N	130	286.01	1917	Phi-N	154	214.87
1891	Bos-N	140	281.74	1916	Phi-N	154	214.69
1890	Bos-N	134	277.60	1903	Bos-A	141	213.48
1892	Cle-N	152	273.85	1907	NY-N	155	209.55
1883	NY-N	97	272.64	1901	Bos-A	138	209.25
1885	Chi-N	113	271.42	1903	Phi-A	137	205.96
1887	Pit-N	125	268.08	1900	Bos-N	142	203.75
1881	Buf-N	83	260.47	1905	Bos-A	153	202.25
1889	Bos-N	133	259.70	1912	NY-N	154	202.05

1920-2000

Year	Team	GS	W	Year	Team	GS	W
1998	Atl-N	162	231.44	1996	Bos-A	162	190.41
1999	Atl-N	162	224.02	1926	Phi-A	150	190.15
2000	Atl-N	162	223.87	1928	Phi-A	153	189.67
1993	Atl-N	162	220.23	1990	Tex-A	162	189.64
1996	Atl-N	162	220.15	1987	Chi-N	161	188.57
1981	Hou-N	110	219.63	1920	Chi-N	154	188.44
1997	Atl-N	162	218.14	1975	Bal-A	159	188.40
1923	NY-A	152	216.30	1982	Bal-A	163	188.31
1994	Atl-N	114	215.92	1972	Bal-A	154	187.95
1982	Hou-N	162	213.03	1974	LA-N	162	186.91
1973	LA-N	162	210.96	1981	Bal-A	105	186.89
1966	LA-N	162	210.62	1971	NY-N	162	186.33
1922	NY-A	154	209.84	1972	Chi-N	156	186.26
1952	Cle-A	155	209.75	1926	NY-A	155	186.12
1924	NY-A	153	209.10	1976	NY-N	162	186.00
1972	LA-N	155	209.08	1927	Phi-A	155	185.55
1995	Atl-N	144	207.82	1928	SL-N	154	185.29
1925	Was-A	152	205.53	1971	Chi-N	162	185.18
1978	LA-N	162	204.53	1960	Mil-N	154	185.18
1925	NY-A	156	204.16	1958	Mil-N	154	184.97
1951	Cle-A	155	203.50	1971	LA-N	162	184.64
1980	LA-N	163	203.29	1973	Bal-A	162	184.47
1950	Cle-A	155	201.55	1977	Bal-A	161	184.34
1979	LA-N	162	199.88	1979	NY-A	160	183.45
1970	SL-N	162	199.27	1969	SF-N	162	183.28
1977	Tex-A	162	198.33	1929	Phi-A	151	182.42
1971	SL-N	163	197.92	1969	SL-N	162	182.06
1973	Chi-N	161	197.72	1996	NY-A	162	181.94
1953	Cle-A	155	197.70	1927	SL-N	153	181.14
1976	LA-N	162	197.49	1980	NY-A	162	181.14
1978	Bal-A	161	197.27	1957	Mil-N	155	180.35
1977	LA-N	162	197.25	1926	Cin-N	157	180.08
1989	Tex-A	162	196.54	1979	Bal-A	159	179.76
1926	Was-A	152	196.31	1921	NY-A	153	179.67
1976	Phi-N	162	195.56	1949	Cle-A	154	179.52
1954	Cle-A	156	195.48	1965	SF-N	163	179.47
1971	Min-A	160	195.08	1956	Mil-N	155	179.41
1959	Mil-N	157	194.67	1975	Chi-A	161	178.98
1967	LA-N	162	194.09	1984	Hou-N	162	178.57
1997	NY-A	162	193.84	1968	NY-N	163	178.28
1968	SF-N	163	193.82	1981	LA-N	110	178.14
1969	LA-N	162	193.75	1970	NY-N	162	178.04
2000	NY-A	161	192.09	1924	Was-A	156	178.01
1970	Min-A	162	191.86	1977	Phi-N	162	177.38
1938	Cle-A	153	190.63	1967	SF-N	162	177.33

The Yankees of the early 1920s had great starters with Herb Pennock (240 W), Waite Hoyt (237), Sad Sam Jones (239), Bob Shawkey (196), and Joe Bush (195).

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Shawkey	1923	NY-A	31	196	Shawkey	1922	NY-A	34	196
Bush	1923	NY-A	30	195	Hoyt	1922	NY-A	31	237
Hoyt	1923	NY-A	28	237	Bush	1922	NY-A	30	195
Jones	1923	NY-A	27	229	Mays	1922	NY-A	29	207
Pennock	1923	NY-A	27	240	Jones	1922	NY-A	28	229
Mays	1923	NY-A	7	207	Murray	1922	NY-A	2	20
Pipgras	1923	NY-A	2	102				154	209.84
			152	216.30					

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Pennock	1924	NY-A	34	240	Jones	1925	NY-A	31	229
Hoyt	1924	NY-A	32	237	Pennock	1925	NY-A	31	240
Bush	1924	NY-A	31	195	Hoyt	1925	NY-A	30	237
Shawkey	1924	NY-A	25	196	Shocker	1925	NY-A	30	187
Jones	1924	NY-A	21	229	Shawkey	1925	NY-A	20	196
Markle	1924	NY-A	3	12	Ferguson	1925	NY-A	5	61
Beall	1924	NY-A	2	5	Johnson	1925	NY-A	4	63
Gaston	1924	NY-A	2	97	Braxton	1925	NY-A	2	50
Mamaux	1924	NY-A	2	76	Shields	1925	NY-A	2	4
Pipgras	1924	NY-A	1	102	Beall	1925	NY-A	1	5
			153	209.10				156	204.16

The Senators of the mid-1920s also had great pitching staffs led by Walter Johnson (417 W) and Stan Coveleski (215):

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Zachary	1925	Was-A	33	186	Coveleski	1926	Was-A	34	215
Coveleski	1925	Was-A	32	215	Johnson	1926	Was-A	33	417
Johnson	1925	Was-A	29	417	Ruether	1926	Was-A	23	137
Ruether	1925	Was-A	29	137	Crowder	1926	Was-A	12	167
Mogridge	1925	Was-A	8	132	Murray	1926	Was-A	12	20
Ferguson	1925	Was-A	6	61	Bush	1926	Was-A	11	195
Gregg	1925	Was-A	5	92	Ogden	1926	Was-A	9	18
Ogden	1925	Was-A	4	18	Marberry	1926	Was-A	5	148
Russell	1925	Was-A	2	71	Ferguson	1926	Was-A	4	61
Thomas	1925	Was-A	2	0	Jones	1926	Was-A	3	2
Ballou	1925	Was-A	1	19	Palmero	1926	Was-A	3	6
Kelley	1925	Was-A	1	42	Morrell	1926	Was-A	2	8
			152	205.53	Kelley	1926	Was-A	1	42
								152	196.31

The Indians had the best pitching staff of the early 1950's with Early Wynn (300), Bob Feller (266), Bob Lemon (207), and Mike Garcia (142). The 1966 Dodgers had the highest rated pitching staff during a period of 50 years with Don Sutton (324), Don Drysdale (209), Claude Osteen (196), and Sandy Koufax (165). They also used only 5 starting pitchers the fewest since 1920 since equaled by the 2003 Mariners:

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Garcia	1952	Cle-A	36	142	Lemon	1951	Cle-A	34	207
Lemon	1952	Cle-A	36	207	Wynn	1951	Cle-A	34	300
Wynn	1952	Cle-A	33	300	Feller	1951	Cle-A	32	266
Feller	1952	Cle-A	30	266	Garcia	1951	Cle-A	30	142
Gromek	1952	Cle-A	13	123	Chakales	1951	Cle-A	10	15
Jones	1952	Cle-A	4	102	Gromek	1951	Cle-A	8	123
Brissie	1952	Cle-A	1	44	Brissie	1951	Cle-A	4	44
Chakales	1952	Cle-A	1	15	Jones	1951	Cle-A	1	102
Rozek	1952	Cle-A	1	1	Rozek	1951	Cle-A	1	1
			155	209.75	Vander Meer	1951	Cle-A	1	119
								155	203.50
Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Lemon	1950	Cle-A	37	207	Lemon	1953	Cle-A	36	207
Feller	1950	Cle-A	34	266	Garcia	1953	Cle-A	35	142
Garcia	1950	Cle-A	29	142	Wynn	1953	Cle-A	34	300
Wynn	1950	Cle-A	28	300	Feller	1953	Cle-A	25	266
Gromek	1950	Cle-A	13	123	Houtteman	1953	Cle-A	13	87
Bearden	1950	Cle-A	3	45	Hoskins	1953	Cle-A	7	9
Zoldak	1950	Cle-A	3	43	Chakales	1953	Cle-A	3	15
Flores	1950	Cle-A	2	44	Gromek	1953	Cle-A	1	123
Rozek	1950	Cle-A	2	1	Tomanek	1953	Cle-A	1	10
Weik	1950	Cle-A	2	6				155	197.70
Aber	1950	Cle-A	1	24					
Pieretti	1950	Cle-A	1	30					
			155	201.55					
Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Wynn	1954	Cle-A	36	300	Koufax	1966	LA-N	41	165
Garcia	1954	Cle-A	34	142	Drysdale	1966	LA-N	40	209
Lemon	1954	Cle-A	33	207	Osteen	1966	LA-N	38	196
Houtteman	1954	Cle-A	25	87	Sutton	1966	LA-N	35	324
Feller	1954	Cle-A	19	266	Moeller	1966	LA-N	8	26
Mossi	1954	Cle-A	5	101				162	210.62
Narleski	1954	Cle-A	2	43					
Hoskins	1954	Cle-A	1	9					
Newhouser	1954	Cle-A	1	207					
			156	195.48					

The Dodgers of the early and late 1970's had Don Sutton (324) and Tommy John (288). The 1970 Cardinals had Steve Carlton (329) and Bob Gibson (251):

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Messersmith	1973	LA-N	33	130	Osteen	1972	LA-N	33	196
Osteen	1973	LA-N	33	196	Sutton	1972	LA-N	33	324
Sutton	1973	LA-N	33	324	Downing	1972	LA-N	30	123
John	1973	LA-N	31	288	John	1972	LA-N	29	288
Downing	1973	LA-N	28	123	Singer	1972	LA-N	25	118
Rau	1973	LA-N	3	81	Rau	1972	LA-N	3	81
Zahn	1973	LA-N	1	111	Strahler	1972	LA-N	2	6
			162	210.96				155	209.08

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Sutton	1978	LA-N	34	324	Hooton	1980	LA-N	33	151
Hooton	1978	LA-N	32	151	Welch	1980	LA-N	32	211
John	1978	LA-N	30	288	Sutton	1980	LA-N	31	324
Rau	1978	LA-N	30	81	Reuss	1980	LA-N	29	220
Rhoden	1978	LA-N	23	151	Goltz	1980	LA-N	27	113
Welch	1978	LA-N	13	211	Sutcliffe	1980	LA-N	10	171
			162	204.53	Hough	1980	LA-N	1	216
								163	203.29

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Sutton	1979	LA-N	32	324	Gibson	1970	SL-N	34	251
Sutcliffe	1979	LA-N	30	171	Carlton	1970	SL-N	33	329
Hooton	1979	LA-N	29	151	Torrez	1970	SL-N	28	185
Reuss	1979	LA-N	21	220	Reuss	1970	SL-N	20	220
Hough	1979	LA-N	14	216	Briles	1970	SL-N	19	129
Welch	1979	LA-N	12	211	Culver	1970	SL-N	7	48
Messersmith	1979	LA-N	11	130	Taylor	1970	SL-N	7	28
Rau	1979	LA-N	11	81	Bertaina	1970	SL-N	5	19
Hannahs	1979	LA-N	2	3	Parker	1970	SL-N	4	15
			162	199.88	Guzman	1970	SL-N	3	1
					Cleveland	1970	SL-N	1	105
					Hraboski	1970	SL-N	1	64
								162	199.27

The Astros of the early 1980s had Nolan Ryan (324), Don Sutton (324), Joe Niekro (221), and Bob Knepper (146):

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Niekro	1981	Hou-N	24	221	Niekro	1982	Hou-N	35	221
Sutton	1981	Hou-N	23	324	Ryan	1982	Hou-N	35	324
Knepper	1981	Hou-N	22	146	Knepper	1982	Hou-N	29	146
Ryan	1981	Hou-N	21	324	Sutton	1982	Hou-N	27	324
Ruthven	1981	Hou-N	15	67	Ruthven	1982	Hou-N	21	67
Andujar	1981	Hou-N	3	127	LaCoss	1982	Hou-N	8	98
Smith	1981	Hou-N	1	1	DiPino	1982	Hou-N	6	35
Sprowl	1981	Hou-N	1	0	Smith	1982	Hou-N	1	53
110 219.63					162 213.03				

Because current pitchers are still accumulating victories, the ratings of modern teams remain in flux. Jamie Moyer, active in 2010, began his career in 1986. However, a special mention must be made for the Braves staff of 1993-2002, led by Greg Maddux (355), Tom Glavine (305), and John Smoltz (213). Kevin Millwood and Jason Marquis were still active in 2010 and future victories would raise the team ratings.

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Glavine	1993	Atl-N	36	305	Glavine	1994	Atl-N	25	305
Maddux	1993	Atl-N	36	355	Maddux	1994	Atl-N	25	355
Avery	1993	Atl-N	35	96	Avery	1994	Atl-N	24	96
Smoltz	1993	Atl-N	35	213	Smoltz	1994	Atl-N	21	213
Smith	1993	Atl-N	14	47	Mercker	1994	Atl-N	17	74
Mercker	1993	Atl-N	6	74	Bielecki	1994	Atl-N	1	70
162 220.23					Woodall	1994	Atl-N	1	10
					114 215.92				

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W	Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Avery	1995	Atl-N	29	96	Glavine	1996	Atl-N	36	305
Glavine	1995	Atl-N	29	305	Maddux	1996	Atl-N	35	355
Smoltz	1995	Atl-N	29	213	Smoltz	1996	Atl-N	35	213
Maddux	1995	Atl-N	28	355	Avery	1996	Atl-N	23	96
Mercker	1995	Atl-N	26	74	Schmidt	1996	Atl-N	11	128
Schmidt	1995	Atl-N	2	128	Wade	1996	Atl-N	8	8
Murray	1995	Atl-N	1	0	Neagle	1996	Atl-N	6	124
144 207.82					Bielecki	1996	Atl-N	5	70
					Woodall	1996	Atl-N	3	10
					162 220.15				

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Smoltz	1997	Atl-N	35	213
Neagle	1997	Atl-N	34	124
Glavine	1997	Atl-N	33	305
Maddux	1997	Atl-N	33	355
Wade	1997	Atl-N	9	8
<i>Millwood</i>	1997	<i>Atl-N</i>	8	159
Brock	1997	Atl-N	6	18
Byrd	1997	Atl-N	4	109
			162	218.14

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Maddux	1998	Atl-N	34	355
Glavine	1998	Atl-N	33	305
Neagle	1998	Atl-N	31	124
<i>Millwood</i>	1998	<i>Atl-N</i>	29	159
Smoltz	1998	Atl-N	26	213
Martinez	1998	Atl-N	5	245
Chen	1998	Atl-N	4	35
			162	231.44

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Glavine	1999	Atl-N	35	305
Maddux	1999	Atl-N	33	355
<i>Millwood</i>	1999	<i>Atl-N</i>	33	159
Smoltz	1999	Atl-N	29	213
Perez	1999	Atl-N	17	73
Mulholland	1999	Atl-N	8	124
Chen	1999	Atl-N	7	35
			162	224.02

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Glavine	2000	Atl-N	35	305
Maddux	2000	Atl-N	35	355
<i>Millwood</i>	2000	<i>Atl-N</i>	35	159
Burkett	2000	Atl-N	22	166
Mulholland	2000	Atl-N	20	124
Ashby	2000	Atl-N	15	98
			162	223.87

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Glavine	2001	Atl-N	35	305
Maddux	2001	Atl-N	34	355
Burkett	2001	Atl-N	34	166
Millwood	2001	Atl-N	21	159
Marquis	2001	Atl-N	16	96
Perez	2001	Atl-N	16	73
Smoltz	2001	Atl-N	5	213
Moss	2001	Atl-N	1	22
			162	219.25

Starter	Year	Team	GS	W
Glavine	2002	Atl-N	36	305
Maddux	2002	Atl-N	34	355
Millwood	2002	Atl-N	34	159
Moss	2002	Atl-N	29	22
Marquis	2002	Atl-N	22	96
Lopez	2002	Atl-N	4	47
Bong	2002	Atl-N	1	0
Ellis	2002	Atl-N	1	0
			161	194.99

The worst team starting pitching staffs since 1920 are led by the 1996-1997 Oakland Athletics:

Year	Team	GS	W
1996	Oak-A	162	18.51
1997	Oak-A	162	20.10
1996	Det-A	162	32.56
1943	Phi-A	155	34.02
1977	Sea-A	162	34.17
1945	Bos-A	157	34.67
1936	Phi-A	154	34.79

Active in 2010

Trever Miller - Brian Moehler