

The Retro Sheet

Official Publication of Retrosheet, Inc.

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Game Account Acquisitions

By David W. Smith

The news continues to be good in this area. For quite some time we have needed 13 games from 1975 and 1976, all played in Atlanta. In late July I received an e-mail message from **Brian Westgate**, who lives in Texas. Brian has hundreds of game accounts on paper and a sizable number on audio tape. He had seen the lists of games we needed in our "Most Wanted" feature on the web page and very generously donated copies of four of his scoresheets plus audio tapes of five others. We were able to obtain the last few we needed from another source so that we now have complete coverage of all games from 1974-forward, a tremendously pleasing set of games. The "most wanted" page has paid off for us at least four separate times; we are keeping it updated.

Luke Kraemer continues to be active on the auction and collectibles front, sending along a few dozen more games from the 1930s and 1940s.

Bob Kistler remains a beacon of hope in Boston. He is finishing up the preparation of about 160 games from both Boston teams in 1951 and asked for the 1950 list so he could do more! I gladly sent him our Boston needs for that year, about 170 games.

Bob Yahr also does wonderful work for Retrosheet by copying Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis game accounts from the 1940s and 1950s. His last shipment was about two inches thick and, as usual, has a lot of difficult-to-find games for us.

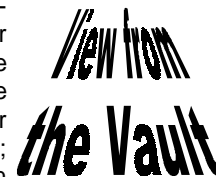
Mike Grahek routinely gets newspapers on Interlibrary Loan and makes copies which he donates to Retrosheet. I recently received a package from him with 231 complete game accounts from the 1902 *New York Evening Telegram* plus another 62 complete games from the 1912 *Chicago Evening American*, which also had a number of partial accounts. Not satisfied with that wonderful accomplishment, he has requested the 1904 *Evening Telegram* (we have already done 1903). Printing accounts from microfilm is very tedious and Mike deserves a tremendous round of Retroapplause.

I have done some more copying myself, finishing off the 1923 *Chicago Daily News* and *St. Louis Star*, as well as the 1934 *New York World-Telegram*, probably around 350 games in all.

Perhaps our most unusual "acquisition" involves the data used by the Mills brothers in their 1971 book *Player Win Averages*. This remarkable book did some very interesting analysis of player performance based on play by play data of the 1969 and 1970 seasons. **Pete Palmer** was able to obtain the data in computer format some years ago, but it is a little difficult to use. It shows the position of runners and outs, but does not specify base hits, walks, or any other details. **Tom Ruane** has agreed to take these files and convert them to our format making deductions from newspaper stories. **John Jarvis** copied accounts from Atlanta, **Marc Stephenson** and his father did the same for Houston and **Bob Boynton**, a SABR member, made copies for San Diego. There will certainly be some gaps in the event files which result, but we will be a lot further along than we were before for some 106 games.

Many thanks to Tom for writing the computer program to convert Pete's files and to the others for making the newspaper copies that will give so much help.

There are three big items of news since the last issue of TRS: 1) we have completed the acquisition and computer entry of all games from 1974-forward; 2) thanks to the generosity of Steve Gietschier and *The Sporting News*, we have microfilm copies of the daily totals for NL players for almost all of the 20th century; 3) we received permission from *Total Sports* to post 1984-1990 event files on our web site and the first two seasons went up in July. The first point will be detailed in the acquisition section, but the other two require more explanation.



David W. Smith
President

The Sporting News has long had a microfilmed copy of the official daily records, however the ownership of the information remained with the National League. Steve Gietschier, archivist for *The Sporting News*, volunteered to contact the National League office on our behalf and ask their permission for us to make copies. It took nearly a year, several phone calls and a few letters, including one from me to the National League explaining how we would use the information, but Steve finally prevailed and in June he received the green light. He brought the film to the SABR meeting in Arizona and handed it off to me. I brought it home, had copies made, and sent *The Sporting News'* copies back to St. Louis. Many thanks to Steve for this help. I also offer the organization's appreciation to the many Retrosheetians who donated money to help cover the costs of the film duplication.

The event files from *Total Sports*, in exactly the same format as all our others, will be posted in stages. The first two are already on the web, 1986 and 1987 will be released around World Series time, 1988 and 1989 will come out at the start of next season and the 1990 data will be posted by the 2000 All-Star game. We are hopeful that event files for more recent seasons will eventually be on our site.

Finally I offer an update on our new policy of releasing partially proofed seasons. None have been posted yet, but they will be soon, certainly by the end of the 1999 season.

Dave

Report from the Annual Meeting of Retrosheet, Inc.

The sixth annual meeting of the Retrosheet, Inc. Board of Directors took place on June 26, 1999 in Scottsdale, AZ. Over 30 "friends of Retrosheet" attended the meeting, which took place during the SABR convention.

The Board re-elected David Vincent as secretary and Luke Kraemer as Director. The Secretary reported that four issues of *The Retro Sheet* were published since the last meeting and the Board conducted no business since the last meeting. The Treasurer reported cash donations during the last year totaling \$545 and donations of unreimbursed expenses at over \$3900. The year's expenses (including postage, tax and administrative costs) totaled over \$4100. This left the corporation with a total income of over \$800. The bank account balance was over \$1800.

The President reported that we have filed the proper papers with the IRS to apply for a tax-exempt status. The IRS is likely to act on the application in the fall. Other items in the report included the fact that the "Most Wanted" list on the web needs updating (he discussed the missing games in the 1960-70 era) and a request for help in finding and copying newspaper game accounts.

The President also reported on the change in the data release policy, which is the sole responsibility of the President. This was reported in "View from the Vault" in the June issue of TRS. See that column for the details.

Last year the Board approved a proposal for a program on our web site that would deliver box scores to a visitor. In the past year, the concept has changed. Tom Ruane and a team of volunteers is creating an expanded set of schedule files. These are based on research by Bob Tiemann and Arnie Braunstein and have been used by Dave Smith to track the contents of our vault. The expanded files contain up to 107 pieces of data on each game and will be a valuable research tool in the future. David Vincent is writing a program to allow access to these files over the internet, although the files can be downloaded for direct use. We are waiting for the system administrator of the web server to start one program so that we can use this utility program.

One of the biggest news items at the meeting was that the NL has given Retrosheet permission to copy the microfilm containing the daily player sheets. We have access to a copy of the AL dailies but this will give us a far greater and easier ability to proof our event files for mistakes. Thanks to Steve Gietschier of The Sporting News for taking our case to the league and loaning their copy of the film.

The Board approved two changes to the Policy Manual, both related to elections. The first added a new section to the Manual stating that there are five named board positions: President/Chair of the Board, Vice-President/Treasurer, Secretary, and two Directors. Any person wishing to be a candidate for a Board position will run for a particular open post on the Board and may only run for one position.

The second change was to the section on the Nominating Committee. It no longer has complete control on how it operates. The new policy lists the following guidelines:

- The Committee will propose at least one (1) and not more than two (2) candidates for each open position on the Board of Directors.
- Each candidate for a Board position will have a valid e-mail address available for Board business and communication.
- The Committee will ask each candidate for a statement, which will include at least a list of volunteer activities performed for Retrosheet, Inc. and a statement of the candidate's vision of the future direction of Retrosheet, Inc. These statements will be presented to the Committee for consideration.

The last item of business was the announcement of a timetable for release of the data files donated by Baseball Workshop/Total Sports, as follows:

1984-85	immediately
1986-87	10-1-1999
1988-89	Opening Day 2000
1990	All-Star game 2000

18 Inning Game in the Vault

On July 10, 1932 Ed Rommel of the Philadelphia Athletics turned in one of the most amazing relief appearances of all time. Entering the game to start the second inning, Rommel pitched 17 innings for the win, allowing 29 hits, 9 walks and 14 runs. He also collected three hits as a batter. The loss went to the third Cleveland pitcher, Wes Ferrell, who pitched the last 11.1 innings, allowing 12 hits, 4 walks and 8 runs. Jimmie Foxx hit three homers for Philadelphia, two of them off loser Ferrell. Also in this game Johnny Burnett set the Major League record for hits in a single game, going 9 for 11. Remarkably, the game only took 4:05 to play.

Game of 7/10/1932 -- Philadelphia at Cleveland (D)

Philadelphia	AB	R	H	RBI	Cleveland	AB	R	H	RBI
Haas M, cf	9	3	2	0	Porter D, rf	10	3	3	2
Cramer D, rf	8	2	2	1	Burnett J, ss	11	4	9	2
Dykes J, 3b	10	2	3	4	Averill E, cf	9	3	5	4
Simmons A, lf	9	4	5	2	Vosmik J, lf	10	2	2	1
Foxx J, 1b	9	4	6	8	Morgan E, 1b	11	1	5	4
McNair E, ss	10	0	2	1	Myatt G, c	7	2	1	0
Heving J, c	4	0	0	0	Cissell B, 2b	9	1	4	3
Madjeski E, c	5	0	0	0	Kamm W, 3b	7	1	2	0
Williams D, 2b	8	1	2	0	Brown C, p	4	0	2	0
Krausse L, p	1	0	0	0	Hudlin W, p	0	0	0	0
Rommel E, p	7	2	3	1	Ferrell W, p	5	0	0	0
	---	---	---	---		---	---	---	---
	80	18	25	17		83	17	33	16

Philadelphia	201	201	702	000	000	201	--	18
Cleveland	300	311	601	000	000	200	--	17

Philadelphia	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Krausse L	1.0	4	3	3	1	0
Rommel E (W)	17.0	29	14	13	9	7

Cleveland	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Brown C	6.2	13	8	7	1	3
Hudlin W*	0.0	0	2	2	2	0
Ferrell W (L)	11.1	12	8	6	4	7

* Pitched to 2 batters in 7th

E -- Brown C, Burnett J, Cissell B 2, Rommel E, Morgan E
 DP -- Philadelphia 2, Cleveland 2
 LOB -- Philadelphia 15, Cleveland 24
 2B -- Burnett J 2, Haas M, Myatt G, Cissell B, Dykes J,
 Vosmik J, Morgan E 2, Foxx J, Kamm W, Porter D, McNair E
 3B -- Williams D
 HR -- Averill E, Foxx J 3
 SB -- Cissell B
 SH -- Kamm W, Ferrell W
 WP -- Rommel E 2
 T -- 4:05

New Courtesy Runner

Clifford Blau found a new courtesy runner while working on the 1934 season. In the June 18, 1934 *New York World-Telegram*, there is a story (but no play-by-play) of that day's Browns-Red Sox games. The story mentions that Dusty Cooke was used as a pinch-runner for Ed Morgan when the latter was hit in the head with a pitch in the fourth, but Morgan returned to 1b in the top of the fifth. Cooke stole second and scored on a hit. He later re-entered the game in center field.

For a complete list of the courtesy runners we have found, visit our web site at:

<http://www.retrosheet.org>

Note on Game Accounts

While working on the 1923 season **Wayne Townsend** has noticed that the newspaper accounts from New York and Chicago for the same game are independent. That is, there was not just a single telegraph feed from the press box, but the Chicago and New York papers had their own scorers whose accounts had distinct differences.

Fans Toss Missiles at Umpire

Washington, 5-27-1948 – The Athletics moved into first place tonight in the midst of the most explosive outburst by Washington fans in recent years. Accompanying the 7-3 Philadelphia victory over the Senators was a 15-minute barrage of bottles, beer cans and other debris thrown at Plate Umpire Red Jones.

Jones was in the path of a ball thrown by Mickey Vernon, Washington 1bman, in the ninth inning. Vernon scooped up Pete Suder's grounder and attempted to throw out Sam Chapman at the plate but the ball struck Jones' chest protector as he stood in the base line.

Even a dismantled seat was fired at Jones, who requested the public address announcer to say the game would be forfeited unless the shower ceased. That announcement was made with one out in the Senators' ninth, however. Police escorted Jones from the field.

From Clem Comly:

In 1944 the Athletics were on the road all of September and October. They played in every other city and played the Yankees twice in NY.

Unusual Play Explained

Recently, **Dave Smith** received the following e-mail message from **Michael J. Schlinkert**:

I was reviewing the game log of the September 18, 1967 Detroit Tigers home game against the Boston Red Sox, and I came across the comment "I have no idea how the DP happened but that's what it says", on a play that happened in the Boston half of the 8th inning on Russ Gibson as the batter, the play being designated as "4(1)4(B)/GDP." This was intriguing to me, as I remembered that Roger Angell, in his book, *The Summer Season*, described the play in question, to wit I have quoted below:

"With none out and Petrocelli at first and Dalton Jones on third, the Boston catcher, Russ Gibson, hit a sharp grounder to Dick McAuliffe at second. McAuliffe glanced over at third, freezing Jones there. Petrocelli, hoping for a run-down that would permit the run to score, stopped dead on the base path, and McAuliffe, ball in hand, ran him back toward first, tagged him, and stepped on the bag in time to retire Gibson for an unassisted double play at first base. No one in the park - at least, none of the ballplayers and none of the sportswriters - had ever seen a play like it."

'Slow Down' Quote Denied by Reardon

Pittsburgh, 7-26-1947 – Beans Reardon, veteran NL umpire, denied today that he had told outfielder Ron Northey of the Cardinals to "slow down" after Northey had smashed a long hit last Sunday [7-20] in a game at Brooklyn. The disputed play occurred in the ninth inning as the Cardinals were leading, 2-0. Northey drove a long fly which hit the top of a centerfield railing and fell back into the playing field. He slowed down rounding 3b and on a fast relay was out at the plate.

In their half of the ninth the Dodgers poured three runs across the plate to win, 3-2. However, Ford Frick, NL president, yesterday upheld a Cardinal protest, credited Northey with a homer, ruled the game a 3-3 tie and ordered it replayed.

Saying that he had noted published reports that he had "told Northey to slow down," Reardon gave this version of the play: "I was umpiring on 3b and when Northey hit the ball I thought it had gone into the stands for a home run. When Northey rounded 2b and was coming into 3b I was waving my arms in a circle, signaling a home run.

"However, I did not speak to Northey. If anyone said anything to him it must have been Tony Kaufmann, the St. Louis 3b coach. I know that Northey slowed down. If he hadn't I think he surely would have been safe at home. But I want to get one thing clear and that is I didn't tell him to slow down.

"In a few seconds I learned that Umpire Larry Goetz at 1b had seen the ball bounce back into the playing field and had so ruled. I guess, as Mr. Frick suggested, we should have taken care of the dispute on the field but we didn't and that's that. I was wrong on the play and at least I have the courage to admit when I am wrong."

[Richie Phillips take note.]

Publicity

Retrosheet continues to have a spot nearly every week in *USA Today Baseball Weekly* as they use some of our strange and unusual plays.

We also received some credit in press notes from the Mets and Mariners for some work we did for them.

And finally, in late July, **Dave Smith** appeared on the pre-game show for the Wilmington (DE) Blue Rocks, the Kansas City affiliate in the class A Carolina League. Thanks to David Vincent for arranging the invitation.

Boston Fans Attack Ty Cobb

Boston, 9-16-1915 – Boston vented its ill feelings on Ty Cobb today. Each time that the Georgian came to bat he was booed and hissed, and when the game was over the bleacherites made a rush at him.

He became the center of a swirling crowd. Wads of paper were hurled at the Detroit player, and heavier objects might have followed had not the police succeeded in working their way through the crowd of fans. They scattered the crowd for a moment and then hurried Cobb toward the clubhouse.

Cobb won the disapproval of the fans when he drove in the first run for the Tigers and from then on it constantly increased. In the eighth inning he threw his bat at the Boston pitcher, Carl Mays. The latter had sent two balls across that Ty thought were intended for his head.

The next ball pitched did hit Cobb on the wrist and with this start his remarkable base-running ability turned in another tally for Detroit. Cobb stole 2b on the first pitch, advanced on Veach's out, and then beat Scott's throw home after Crawford's infield drive.

Strange and Unusual Plays

Retrosheet volunteers **Steve Barkan**, **Greg Beston**, and **Clem Comly** contributed to this list. **Contributions needed!**

7-4-1944 SLA @ PHA (G1) – In the top of the third inning, the Browns had runners on 1b and 2b with no one out. Mike Kreevich moved the runners up with a sacrifice bunt so Connie Mack ordered George McQuinn to be walked intentionally. Vern Stephens hit into a force play on which Zig Jakucki scored from 3b and Don Gutteridge scored from 2b. 64(1)/FO.3-H;2-H

8-1944 CGA @ PHA - Eddie Lopat, rookie LH starter for the Chisox, has a 2-1 lead going into the home fifth. He walks the other pitcher and gives up three straight hits. Frankie Hayes, the season clean-up hitter for the A's (the only man to hit double-figure HRs for them that year), a right-handed bat, comes up with first and second, 0 out, and a 3-2 lead. The result? 13/SH.2-3;1-2

6-14-1958 KCA @ BOS – With one out in the bottom of the second inning, Red Sox center fielder Jimmy Piersall hit a ground-rule home run. His long drive to left center hit off the center field wall and caromed into the center field bleachers. Under existing ground rule, the hit was ruled a homer.

9-30-1966 HOU @ NYN - Jack Fisher of the Mets pitched a complete game win but only had two plate appearances! This isn't a trick; the Mets beat Larry Dierker in the bottom of the ninth when Ron Hunt, batting for eighth place batter Danny Napoleon, singled to end the game with the Mets having a total of 26 batters.

9-11-1972 BOS @ CLE – In the bottom of the 6th inning, in a 5-5 game, the Indians had Buddy Bell on 3b, Jack Heidemann on 2b, and Kurt Bevacqua on 1b with one out. Pinch-hitter Roy Foster flew to Ben Oglivie in LF, but Oglivie dropped the ball. Oglivie recovered and threw to Rico Petrocelli at 3b to get the force on Heidemann. At almost the same instant, Foster was called out for passing Bevacqua between 1b and 2b for an inning ending double play. Bell had crossed the plate just before both of the outs, and therefore his run counted in a very weird sacrifice fly/double play, where neither out was made on the fly ball: 75(2)/FO/SF/DP.3-H;BX2(4). The run proved crucial, as Cleveland won 6-5.

5-8-1984 MIL @ CHA – The game was suspended at 1:05 AM at the end of the 17th inning with the score tied at 3. The game was resumed the next evening at 6:35 PM before the regularly scheduled contest. Each team scored three runs in the 21st inning, with the White Sox losing a chance to win in the 21st when runner Dave Stegman was called out because he was touched by third base coach Jim Leyland, leading to a protest of the game by Chicago manager Tony LaRussa. The game finally ended when Harold Baines homered in the bottom of the 25th to complete the eight hour and six minute affair. The White Sox scoresheet (which covers three pages) notes that Baines' homer came on the 753rd pitch of the game. It is the only homer after the 22nd inning in history.

Cubs Protest Loss to Cards

Chicago, 9-26-1945 – In one hilarious inning, the Cardinals waltzed five runs home to crush the Cubs, 11 to 6, today and keep the fading fires of their NL pennant hopes burning. There was still a joker in the deck, though, for Manager Jolly Cholly Grimm, whose antics in the 3b coaching job are part of the show here, played the game under protest from early in the seventh inning onward, after the four umpires handling this set had reversed themselves in the Cards' favor.

The protest was made officially before any of the five St. Louis runs romped across the plate in the seventh. Grimm's protest, which closed a 20-minute dispute involving all players and umpires, was filed after the second Cardinal batter in the seventh, Whitey Kurowski, had singled to right center. Ray Sanders shot a fly to the far rf corner and Nicholson took up the chase. As Bill reached for the ball, it fell into his glove, just as he fell into the wall.

The ball popped out of his glove against the wall, but Bill snagged it on the bounce as Butch Henline, umpiring at 2b, waved it a fair catch. Meantime, Kurowski and Sanders passed each other on the baseline between 1b and 2b before Kurowski proceeded to 2b and Sanders stood on 1b. Nicholson finally recovered the ball and threw to Merullo on 2b, who relayed to Phil Cavaretta on 1b. Cavaretta tagged 1b,

claiming a double play. As Cavaretta touched the bag, Umpire Lee Ballanfant waved his thumb, indicating Kurowski was out.

Immediately the Cardinals charged out of their dugout and jammed around 1b, howling their arguments for five full minutes at Ballanfant, who finally joined the rest of the four arbiters on the baseline between 2b and 3b. They huddled for several minutes more, then Umpire-in-Chief Dusty Boggess announced reversal of Henline's decision, giving Sanders a single and leaving the Cards with two men on base. Headed by Grimm, the Cubs thundered across the diamond, shouting protests. For 10 or 15 minutes more it lasted, as Grimm carried his plea first to this umpire then to that. This time the decision stuck, though, and Grimm announced the Cubs were completing the game under protest.

"I'm protesting," he declared later, "on the ground that Sanders passed Kurowski on the baseline." At the same time, Umpire Babe Pinelli asserted it was impossible to call either runner out for passing on the baseline. "After all," he explained, "you can't penalize Kurowski, because when the ball was first hit, it was ruled a plain fly ball, and Kurowski had a perfect right to return to 1b, passing Sanders anywhere, since he had been ruled out."

New Debut Date

Wayne Townsend has struck again. We reported a few issues back that Wayne had found Moe Berg playing in the majors before his official debut date. Now Wayne has realized that Charlie Hargreaves also made his debut in that *same game!* The date is 6-27-1923 and Hargreaves came in as a defensive replacement in the sixth inning for the Dodgers.

Wayne commented on the double swing and a miss: "I guess the historians for this game must have been from Philadelphia (the Phils lost 15-5 before only 1,500 fans.)"

This information has been passed on to Bill Carle of SABR's Biographical Committee. Congratulations to Wayne for another great find.

One Honest Ballplayer

New York, 9-8-1915 – "Speaking of umpires," said Hans Wagner recently, "I recollect a case which will prove that there are some ball players who will call them as they see them, too. We were playing the Philadelphia club and a ball was hit to rf by one of the Philadelphia batters. It looked like a foul, and, as there were three men on the bases, the way I remember it, we put up an awful howl. The umpire insisted the ball was fair and we argued strenuously that it was outside the line. 'Well, I'll leave it to your right fielder if the ball wasn't fair,' said the umpire. 'You're on,' we all yelled. We were confident it was foul and, anyhow, we thought Wilson, who was playing in the right garden for us, would see it that way – not dishonestly you know, but a player almost always sees a thing the way he wants to see it and convinces himself he is right, too. The umpire walked out to Wilson and asked his honest opinion about the hit. 'Fair,' said our fielder without any hesitation. And we all went back to our knitting and didn't question another decision during that game."

Angels Win One on the Slopes of Cleveland

Cleveland, 5-18-1981 – Handing in his lineup card before the start of last night's game, Angels manager Jim Fregosi informed the umpires that he was playing it under protest. After the Angels beat the Indians, 7-2, Fregosi said he would not file the protest. He said, however, that he would protest the next game if tests are not taken to determine whether the slope of the mound at Municipal Stadium conforms to specifications.

"It's like pitching off Everest," Fregosi said. "It's definitely the steepest mound in the league," agreed Angels' reliever Andy Hassler, who may have suffered a disabling groin pull because of it.

Indians' manager Dave Garcia said Fregosi seemed to be making a mountain out of a molehill, but Fregosi insisted that the increased slant works to the advantage of a pitching staff that leads the AL in almost every category. Theoretically at least, it should work to the pitcher's advantage, though it didn't win this game.

"I simply fell into some bad habits on that mound," said Hassler. "I was striding too far and falling off toward 3b. Normally, it would work to the advantage of a pitcher who was used to it. The pitch that's down the middle becomes a low strike. I'm not a surveyor, but I'd say it's at least 16 inches high."

The height of the mound must be only 10 inches above the plate and must slope at an angle not greater than one inch per foot. Fregosi insisted that the home plate area has been elevated. He said the mound has also been elevated but admitted it probably conforms to the 10-inch rule. The problem, Fregosi said, is the slope of the mound.

"A few years ago," he said, "they lowered all the mounds to produce more hitting. It stands to reason that a greater slope favors the pitcher. I've seen this done before, but I've also seen better jobs of it."

Dick Butler, the AL's supervisor of umpires, was here last night and said that he would attempt to take new measurements today. He said all mounds are measured during the season's first month and that there was no problem when those measurements were taken here.

Old-Time Trick Defeats Dodgers

St. Louis, 8-7-1915 – A trick that was obsolete when Father Time was a boy, and resurrected by "Diamond Jack" O'Connor years ago and then forgotten again, enabled the Cardinals to defeat Brooklyn, 6-4. "Rabbit" Huggins, who recently read of the play in dust-covered baseball literature, was the man who put it into execution. Ed Appleton, on the rubber for Brooklyn, took the tragical part of the "goat." He deserves sympathy rather than censure. Anyone so unschooled in baseball tactics as to fall for the ancient trick is to be pitied.

It all happened in the seventh. The score was tied 4-4, the bases were full for St. Louis and Appleton was just glancing around preparatory to winding up. Little Huggins had a sudden hunch. "Let me see the ball," he seemed to say to Appleton, as he beckoned to him from the coacher's box. Always obliging, Appleton made the toss and Huggins stepped to one side, letting the ball roll to the grandstand. Miller scored on the throw and each of the other runners moved up a bag.

“THE MORE THINGS CHANGE” DEPARTMENT

Dreyfuss Decries “Rabbit Ball”

The New York Times, 7-15-1925 – The question of the “rabbit ball,” its existence, habits and what to do about it, will be thoroughly threshed out at the annual summer meeting of the National League today, according to Barney Dreyfuss, President of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Mr. Dreyfuss said yesterday that he would see that the matter was brought up. According to the Pittsburgh president the so-called “rabbit ball” does not exist, but is the development of short fences in five of the parks in the circuit.

“You never hear any complaints about the liveliness of the present ball in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati or Boston, where the parks are large,” said Mr. Dreyfuss yesterday. “It is only in the five cities where the short fences make home runs numerous that there is any objection raised. I intend to have the matter taken up at the National League meeting, and at that time I will urge that hits be determined by the distance of the fences from home plate, limiting short drives over the fence to singles or doubles according to the distance that the ball travels.

“I have little hope of support, as the representatives of the five clubs with short fences would be able to outvote the others five to three. The matter will be brought up, however, and something definite may be decided.”

Mr. Dreyfuss quoted figures to show that many more home runs were hit last year in the parks with short fences than in those where long drives were necessary to carry over the walls.

Survey Condemns Home Run Epidemic

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* surveyed the sixteen big league managers in July 1929 concerning the high home run totals in baseball at that time. Fifteen of the skippers answered the telegram with eleven of them saying that they believed the epidemic of homer hitting was ruinous to the game. They also stated that something should be done to increase the efficiency of pitching. The subject of the “rabbit ball” was pointed to by some as the cause. Only Miller Huggins (Yankees), Connie Mack (Athletics), Joe McCarthy (Cubs), and Emil Fuch (Braves) thought that all the homers helped the game.

Most of the remedies suggested by the managers related to discoloring the ball or keeping it in play for a longer time. Several managers thought the high levels of hitting were due to the high visibility of the ball, the too frequent use of new balls in a game, the use of an anti-gloss process on the ball, and too great restrictions on the pitchers.

Wilbert Robinson of the Robins said: “The home run has become a joke. I believe the umpires should treat the ball with dirt before it is used.”

[What would those fellows think now?]

Those Foxy Pitchers

Sporting Life, 9-17-1898 – “Pitchers are getting too clever in these days,” says Jimmy McGuire. “While we were in Cincinnati, Pink Hawley dropped around to the Gibson House and swapped talk with Mercer and Gus Weyhing. ‘What do you hear of this new guy, Green, of the Orphans; they tell me he’s quite a hitter,’ said Hawley. ‘But I hear that he is very much on the first car of the pork special train if you work a speedy ball over the inside corner at him,’ said Weyhing. ‘Much obliged for the tip, Gus. I will feed him on a fare of those insiders. Just take a chance on working ‘em close even if I do take a button or two of his jersey.’ And still we wonder why the pitchers are improving every season. In my opinion the public is not stuck on this science. What they want is to hear music of the bat by the Keelers, Delehantys and Burketts, as they plunk out the singles. The hitting, not the pitchers’ game, is the real thing so far as the public is concerned.”



The Boston Globe, 9-1898 – One of the unpleasant features of the games in this city of late has been poor umpiring. With two first-class men to officiate, the players will know just how to act, and the games will go smoothly; on the other hand, incompetent umpiring will make it unpleasant for players and spectators.

Editor's note: Retrosheet data has been used for many statistical studies that have become research presentations at events including SABR regional and national meetings. We are going to make some of these papers available on our web site in the future. The following is the result of a request that Dave Smith received recently and has never appeared anywhere before.

Does it matter how they get on?

By David W. Smith

I was recently asked how often it happens that a batter gets to first base because he forces out a previous runner and then scores himself. Although there are lots of reasons not to be too excited about runs scored totals for individuals (this is related to the much larger question about the value of RBI), it may seem unfair to credit this second batter with a run when it was one of his teammates who did the work of reaching base safely. Without getting lost in a discussion of relative virtue or other metaphysical notions, I offer below a brief answer to the question I was asked plus a few more comments about reaching base and scoring runs.

In my studies I always follow the example of Allan Roth and separate force plays from fielder's choices, with the latter being outs on runners who were not forced to run by the batter's action. Of course, many people call all these plays fielder's choices, and a force out is really just a special case of fielder's choice, but I have always found the distinction meaningful. For 1998 (all games), the results are:

	Number	Scored
Force outs	2602	511
Fielder's choices	611	153

Note these only count plays with 0 or 1 out, since the inning ends if there are two outs when the play occurs and then the batter had no chance to score. There were 1879 two-out force plays and 17 fielder's choices. There are two obvious percentages to calculate with these numbers: percentage of times the batter reaching base this way scores, and the percentage of overall runs scored this way. Since there were 23297 runs scored in the Major Leagues in 1998, then we get:

	% of all runs	% of times rchd
Force Outs	2.2	19.6
Fielder's Choices	0.7	25.9
Total	2.9	20.7

So the first conclusion is that about 3% of all runs are scored by runners who reached base via force out or fielder's choice. However, there is another question

which arises from considering the other percentage: do the chances of a runner eventually scoring depend on how he reached base? Many announcers say things such as "a leadoff walk is more likely to score than a leadoff hit". I tallied all times batters reached first base and calculated what percentage of the time they scored. I then did the same thing for leadoff situations. The results are:

All situations

	Reached	Scored	%
Single	29785	8284	27.8
Walk	17514	4463	25.5
Hit by pitch	1587	445	28.0
Errors (to 1b)	1558	443	28.4
Force out/FC	3213	664	20.7
Total	53657	14299	26.6

Leadoff Batters

	Reached	Scored	%
Single	7066	2850	40.3
Walk	3297	1344	40.8
Hit by pitch	332	134	40.4
Errors (to 1b)	340	145	42.6
Total	11035	4473	40.5

The "all situations" table shows some variation, but the only significant difference is that batters reaching on force outs or fielder's choices are less likely to score. I presume this reflects the fact that an out was made on these plays while the batter was safe.

The "leadoff" situation shows remarkable constancy across the different categories, with batters reaching first on an error having a slightly higher chance to score.

So, the simplest answer to the question in the title is "no".

Comments are welcomed.

We are in desperate need of articles for future issues of The Retro Sheet. They can be long or short, historical or statistical, serious or funny, original or copied from an old newspaper. Please send your ideas or articles to the editor at:

GrandSlams@aol.com

Thanks

50 Homer Seasons

Editor's Note: The following has been reported incorrectly throughout the media in the last few weeks. We want you to quote correct numbers when you dazzle your friends, so here they are.

1947 Ralph Kiner (51)
 Johnny Mize (51)
 1961 Roger Maris (61)
 Mickey Mantle (54)

In the history of baseball, there have been 29 batters who have hit at least 50 homers in one season, including the 1999 totals of Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire. Here is how they break down:

1871-1994 18
 1995-present 11

EVERY year since 1996 has had multiple 50s:

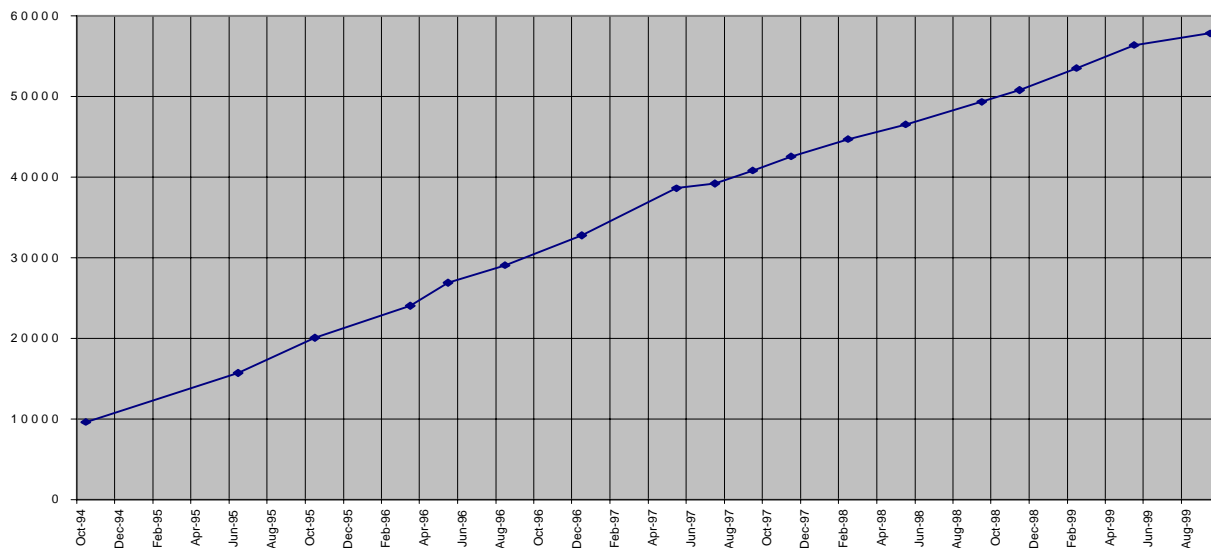
1996 McGwire (52)
 Brady Anderson (50)
 1997 McGwire (58)
 Ken Griffey (56)
 1998 McGwire (70)
 Sosa (66)
 Griffey (56)
 Greg Vaughn (50)
 1999 Sosa
 McGwire

Through 1995, there had been 3 seasons in which multiple players had hit 50:

1938 Hank Greenberg (58)
 Jimmie Foxx (50)

Pilgrim's Progress

Since Dave Smith started keeping exact numbers on games input by the RetroSquad in October 1994, we have reported them to you in TRS. This chart shows the steady progress we have made over the last five years.



Here is the report on group activity since the last issue of TRS. The smallest number of games entered in a single week during this period was 42 and the highest was 163.

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The Scoreboard

Total Games in Computer (All Years before 1984)	57,858
Games Entered since last Report	1,469
Days since last Report (6/1/99 to 9/1/99)	96
Games Entered per Week (13 weeks, 5 days)	107.1
Games Entered per Day (The Fisher Index)	15.3