



Vagrant League

Fantasy Baseball



Volume 2, Issue 3

August 2004

Hall of Fame

How Many Players Would you Have

Barry Greenberg

Team Owner

In our quest to mimic the realities of the baseball world in our statistical fantasy league, we can emulate 'real' baseball in various ways. Appearing at the draft in team uniforms of our own choosing, of course in conformity to soon to be promulgated regulations from the commissioner's office, might be one way. Another may be to extend the roto season into the playoffs and then only count stats if our players are actually involved in post-season play.

Since we are for good reason unlikely to adopt either of the above suggestions, here is another simple way to further emulate actual baseball and enhance your enjoyment of the roto experience. Each owner can establish a "Hall of Fame" for his franchise, as do the real major league franchises. A 'Vagrant Hall of Fame' could also be set up, but this would likely mirror the inductees into the real Hall of Fame over the next several years, at least for the National League, since almost every real hall

Continued on page 3 – How Many Players

Baseball History

I Bet You Didn't Know...

Chris Oliva

Team Owner

- That the fewest number of pitches by a pitcher throwing a complete 9-inning game is.....58!! This was accomplished by Charley "Red" Barrett of the Boston Braves on August 10, 1944 against the Cincinnati Reds. The Braves won 2-0.
- I bet you also didn't know that this same game is the quickest 9-inning night game ever played. It was over in a record 1 hour and 15 minutes!!
- That the "batting average" statistic first appeared in print during the 1874 season – 2 years before the first ever National League season.
- That "WW" was actually written on the official score card that described Phil Rizzuto on a play where he "wasn't watching."
- That Frank Thomas (no not the current White Sox slugger) was the only man to play in both the New York (Baseball) Giants last game and the New York Mets first game.
- That Willie Wilson, the diminutive KC Royal outfielder hit 6 home runs in 1979.....not exactly an amazing stat.....until you find out that 5 of the 6 HR's were of the "inside the park" variety.
- That Pete Rose, Pee Wee Reese, Johnny Callison and Hank Aaron all played in 8 no-hit games during their respective careers.
- That Joe Niekro had a 22 year major league career and could manage to hit only 1 home run. Further, that 1 home run just happened to come off of his brother Phil on May 29, 1976 allowing Joe's Houston Astros to beat Phil's Atlanta Braves 4-3.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 [Hall of Fame](#)
- 1 [Baseball History](#)
- 2 [September Expansion – What You Need to Know](#)
- 3 [Hitting Records](#)
- 3 [Pitching Records](#)
- 5 [When the Yankees Nearly Moved to Boston](#)

How Many Players

of famer will also be roto standouts.

The value of individual franchise 'Halls of Fame' is that they will acknowledge the value of players only to that franchise. So the first rule of eligibility is this: the player must be on the roster of your team for no less than 2 and 1/2 seasons of continuous service. Note that the service must be uninterrupted, except by trips to the DL or deactivation. The only other considerations are a players overall level of performance and value. It is these last two considerations that will cause one to closely scrutinize their players for possible induction.

To add another element to this, one can consider certain standouts as 'first ballot' inductees. Of course, we will not have committees voting on our inductees, unless we want to get really out of control, but can nevertheless bestow the honor of the 'first vote' election reserved for those true standouts who could be expected to garner the 75% of the vote on their first year of eligibility if we did.

To give some examples, here is how I would 'vote' for various players who have played for the Barbarryans:

'First Vote' Inductee:

Jason Schmidt - 2002- 2004

He led the Barbarryans starting staff to money finishes in all three seasons, including 2nd in 2002 and --- (1st, hopefully) in 2004. Acquired in 2002 for \$8 (\$4 under the then prevailing \$130 salary cap), he has been one of, if not the most, dominant NL starters during that time period. Led the NL in ERA and WHIP in 2003, second in Cy Young that year. Pending completion of 2004 season, he is the leading candidate for this years Cy, and at or near the top in four Roto categories. Given his dominance combined with his low salary, a true Hall of Famer.

Possible Inductees:

Shaun Green - 2001- 2003

Led the Barbarryans offense to two second place finishes, and the all time team career leader in HR's & RBI's (... like I really keep these stats). Hit four HRs in one game in 2002. He would be a sure thing, but for that such production is expected for a \$34 player and he had a below par 2003.

Matt Clement - 2002- 2004

An example of a not-great player that may be a team Hall of famer based on value. A borderline low # 1 - solid # 2 starter at \$10 is very hard to come by. However, should the Hall be limited to those who are more accomplished? Also instructive as to the rule regarding service time; Clement was acquired via trade before the All-star break in 2002 and just makes it to the 2 1/2 year service mark at the conclusion of this season.

Not Quite:

Larry Walker - 1991, 2001-2003

See Shawn Green, although not as good during his tenure with the Barbarryans. However, he did turn in one of the all time greatest roto seasons of all time during the 1990s. Too bad it was for some other team.

Eric Gagne - 2002-2003

Acquired for \$12 and saved over 50 games his first season. Traded away during mid point of 2003 so would not be eligible, despite his greatness and value.

Note how only one player, Jason Schmidt, would be a sure vote. The idea is to keep it selective, as the 'Hall' should be an honor, even in fantasy baseball. Try it for your team. Some of the more established franchises may have several inductees; some may have none, give it a few years and see how the list grows. Have fun.



September Expansion

What You Need to Know

Ed Feldman

Commissioner

Starting with the September 7th roster moves, rosters expand by one for a total of 24 active players. This 'super utility' player can be either a hitter or pitcher. You can activate a player from your bench, disabled list or pick up a player from the free agent pool. There is no 'preference' with this pickup so the normal free agent pickup rules apply with respect to order. You do not have to do this the first week or at all if you do not want to.

Reminder:

If a player in your farm system gets called up September 1st or later you can choose to leave him in your farm system for the remainder of the season. If you have a farm system player get called up August 31st or earlier you must make a him within 2 weeks as normal.



Hitting Records in Jeopardy

This Years Best and Worst

Ed Feldman

Historian

With a little more than 6 weeks left to the season at the time I am writing this it is time to examine the best and the worst of this season and see if any records will fall, for good or ill. Lets take a look at hitting first.

Batting Average. The all-time best of .2901 set by Egghead (a.k.a. the Mutts) in 2000 narrowly eclipsed the second the then first place holder 1993 Futurians (and the current second place holder) with a batting average of .2896. This year's current batter average leader at press time is the Marauders with a .2818 average. The records will stand another year.

On the flip side, the worst ever batting average set by the Black Sox (a.k.a. the Mutts) was set in 1991 with a paltry .2501 batting average. (Although I hate do stick up for Craig, he did not draft this team, he took over for another team 2 months into the inaugural season so this mess was not really his although like John Franco, he clearly put gas on the fire.). Second place in this ugly category, not too far from the bottom dweller, is the Flatulators (.a.k.a. the Master Blasters) with a .2543 average. Currently in last place is the every other wonders the Monarchs with a .2599 average. Clearly there are no BA records in jeopardy of being broken.

Home Runs. The high-water benchmark of 303 was set by Eight Men Out in 1999 narrowly edging out the Mudhen's 1996 mark of 300. With the season about 75% complete the BarBarryans 187 current home runs projects out to about 250 round-trippers. While that may be good enough to take first this year the 2004 BarBarryans will not enter the records books here.

On the other side of the coin, the worst home run years, in 1992 by the Porn Flakes with 68 and 1994 (the strike shortened year) by Beavis with 78. If we took out the strike shortened season the Power Brokers (a.k.a. the BarBarryans) would have owned second with 84 homeruns. Since the last place Monarchs already have 127 these records are safe as well. Prediction, these two records will never be broken.

Runs Batted In. The 1996 Mudhen record of 1113 and the 1999 Eight Men Out close second of 1108 seems like

Continued on next page – Hitting Records

Pitching Records in Jeopardy

This Years Best and Worst

Ed Feldman

Historian

Lets take a look at the pitching records.

Wins. The mark of 105 set last year by the Monarchs and the Masters Blasters mark of 103 in 2001 has a chance to be challenged as KrackerJacks projects out to 97. The KrackerJacks have come strong of late in wins and with a sustained late season break a record. The futility mark of 44 by Double D in 1995 and tied by Beavis in the 1994 strike shortened season will stand at least another year as Red Storm has 45 at the time of writing. Even the next non-strike year low of 51 set by the BarBarryans in 1993 should be surpassed in the coming weeks. Maybe on wins record this year will fall, but not likely.

Saves. Finally a category the Monarchs are not miserable in this year. There projected finish of 94.6 saves plants them squarely between the 1997 first place Mudhens 95 saves and the 94 saves put up by the 2002 BarBarryans. Clearly a record may fall here; I guess even bad teams must have a few successes. Speaking of bad teams, at least in saves this year, the Master Blasters will tie the penultimate effort in futility with just 1 stinkin' accidental save set by the Porn Flakes in 1991. Even if hurler Steve Kline can manage to get lucky eek out another lousy save this year the Master Blasters will still eclipse the paltry 3 set by the Marauders in 2002. Ouch! How about drafting a closer guys, this isn't rocket science.

ERA. Hard to predict but the records on the good side are likely safe as the 1st & 2nd place marks of 3.057 & 3.193 set in 1992 & 1991 respectively, both by the Mudhens will not be approached despite the BarBarryans impressive 3.57 2004 ERA. On the loser side however, we could see 2nd worst fall. That current mark in futility, set by Double D in 2001 with 4.844 is currently beaten at writing time by the Master Blaster with 4.888. Should things continue down hill for the 'Blasters the 5.133 mark set by Ryan Express in 2000 could fall as well. Not a banner year in the Master Blaster pitching house.

Ratio. The all-time best set in 1992 by the Mudhens with 1.180 won't be broken but Eight Men Out could take the 2nd place mark of 1.207 from the 1991 Mudhens. Eight

Continued on next page – Pitching Records

Hitting Records

they will stand as the BarBarryans project out to about 950. On the down side, the afore mentioned Monarchs already have 452 which beats out the Pron Flakes worst year of 428 in 1992 and Beavis' strike shortened output of 443. Throwing out the strike year, the Power Brokers 467 in 1991 may even be broken by the time you read this so no records being created here.

Runs Scored. Grand Salami's (a.k.a. the Mutts) 1117 in 1999 and the Mudhens 1996 second best of 1104 seems safe with the BarBarryans projected finish of 1010. The offensively challenged Monarchs 501 runs already beats the Futurians 1994 strike shortened season of 446 and 509 in 1992. Once again taking out the strike shortened season, the 517 put by the Power Brokers in 1991 will also likely be broken by the time you read this.

Stolen Bases. This is definitely a lost art. The Master Blasters project total of 160 is only 75 off the 2nd place 1996 finish of the X-Men's 235 and a whopping 100 less than the 1999 first place Grand Salami (a.k.a. Mutts). Maybe we shouldn't use this category anymore. We finally have a record in serious jeopardy of being broken by the Marauders. This is a record you don't want though. Their projected 52 swipes this year would tie the worst ever mark set by Eight Men Out just last year and, even with a little surge, could still finish behind the 56 set by the Texas Longhorns in 1998. Not the way you want to get in the record books.

The only race to watch is:

- The Marauders could take the top honors in worst speed team ever. A dubious way to get your name in the record books.

One question about stolen bases. Will we ever see 260 stolen bases again from a team? There are barely 260 stolen bases in the whole NL. The top **10** base stealers in the NL so far are Podsednick (46), Roberts (33), Abreu (29), Pierre (27), Freel (23), Patterson (21), Rollins (21), Cameron (20), Chavez (19) and Furcal (19) with a combined total of 258 stolen bases. That's still 2 shy of the 1997 260 swipe mark set by the Flatulators (Master Blasters). Note that the projected 160 stolen base pace that the Master Blasters are on this year would have only netted him 6 points in this category in 1997. Where the hell did all the stolen bases go?



Pitching Records

Men Out is currently sporting a 1.2154 ratio. Go Lee. On the flip side the worst ratio ever, by the 2000 Futurians, of 1.522 and the 2nd worst of 1.501 by Ryan Express, also in 2000 seem safe. The Master Blasters would have to pitch to a ratio of about 1.7 the rest of the way to move his 1.4614 past either of these marks. The way it has gone for him lately though makes this not entirely impossible.

Strikeouts. Although the BarBarryans project out to a very nice 1171 K's, he would fall short by 155 from the 1st place 1996 Flatulators (a.k.a. Master Blasters) 1326 K's and 72 short of Arms & Hammers distant second 1243 K's in 1999. This years worst, once again the Monarchs with 617 whiffs, have already out-paced the 1993 BarBarryans (614) and the 1994 strike shortened 605 put up by Second to None (a.k.a. the Mutts). Even taking out the strike year, it seems the Monarchs will ultimately pass the 1992 Mylanta Braves' 681.

That's a look at the pitching records. The races to watch are:

- The Monarchs for most saves ever and the Master Blasters to tie least saves ever.
- The Master Blasters with the worst ERA ever.
- Eight Men out for 2nd best all-time RATIO.

Good luck to those of you going for records(or not going for records as the case may be).

A quick note about maybe the best ever back-to back pitching seasons ever by the 1991/1992 Mudhens. At a quick glance, the Mudhens led the league in both era and ratio in 1991 with a 3.193 and 1.207 respectively. I know today's game is a different time in baseball than it was back then, before the players and the ball were all juiced and before expansion watered down the talent but these are awesome numbers. As we all have experienced, pitching is a very difficult thing to judge from year to year. You may rate a few players dead on but to do it for your whole pitching staff is very difficult to do. The thing is the Mudhens beat both those numbers the following year with 3.057 and 1.180 era and ratio respectively. WOW! With the game the way it is today with the juice flowing like Gatorade and the watered down expansion talent, I do not see how any VLFB team in the future can ever challenge these number for a whole season. We will all try though.



When the Yankees Nearly Moved to Boston

Excerpt from *Yankees Century: 100 Years of New York Yankees Baseball* by Glenn Stout

The Boston Yankees. Is that an oxymoron or what? But it almost happened

Babe Ruth was sold to the New York Yankees in December 1919. Within months, the Yankees almost moved to Boston to play in Fenway Park, and Babe Ruth came this close to coming back to Beantown. As a Boston Yankee. That's right, Red Sox fans. That team in New York with 26 world championships could have been Boston's.

Red Sox fans have long blamed former owner Harry Frazee for the loss of Ruth and the subsequent demise of the franchise, all wrapped up in a tidy package known as "the Curse of the Bambino." For more than eight decades Sox fans have rued the sale of Ruth to the Yankees, using the deal to explain how things have always gone wrong for the Red Sox and right for the Yankees. Frazee has become a malevolent figure like other local symbols of evil such as the Boston Strangler, Bucky "Bleeping" Dent, and Don Zimmer.

"The Curse" makes a nice, neat story. But as fact, it makes nice fiction. For while "the Curse" is a good hook, it is not very good history.

In fact, shenanigans elsewhere in the American League cost Boston Babe Ruth. And not once, but twice.

Here's how it happened.

First, it must be said that virtually every assumption that underlies "the Curse" is factually incorrect. Frazee was neither a failure in the theater nor ever broke. Neither did he use the proceeds of the sale to finance his play "No, No, Nanette" or any other. In fact, Frazee was actually one of Broadway's grand success stories.

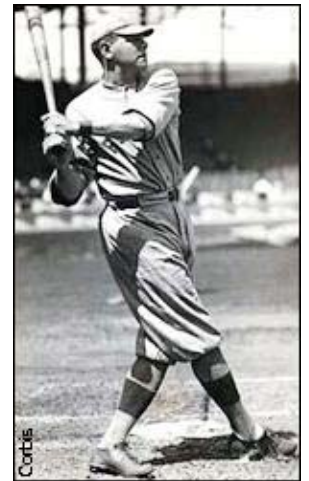
Wealthy and well connected, Frazee was something of a visionary among the men who owned baseball teams at the time. Not only was he the first to propose the single-commissioner system, but it was Frazee who made the successful argument during World War I that baseball was good for the nation's morale, saving the 1918 season and providing the logic that also saved baseball during World War II.

From the instant Harry Frazee bought the Red Sox from Joseph Lannin in November of 1916, American League president Ban Johnson wanted him out. Frazee grated against Johnson in several ways, including his relative youth, his theatrical background, and even his religion, which Johnson and many contemporaries, particularly in the press, incorrectly assumed was Jewish. Johnson was accustomed to handpicking the owners in his league and Frazee had crashed the owners' club without permission. The two clashed at every turn. Johnson called Frazee "the champion wrecker of baseball" and promised to revoke the franchise. Frazee accurately whined that Johnson had made him "his particular target."

In the summer of 1919 everything came to a head when Red Sox star pitcher Carl Mays jumped the club. Johnson wanted Frazee to suspend Mays. Instead, Frazee sold him to Yankees owners Jacob Ruppert and Cap Huston, who were angry with Johnson for not living up to a promise to help them get some players for their moribund franchise.

Everybody went to court as Johnson tried to block the deal and prevent the Yankees from playing Mays. The end result dramatically increased the acrimony between Frazee and Johnson and split the American League into two factions: the Yankees, Red Sox and White Sox, known as the "Insurrectos," versus Johnson and the remaining five clubs, a.k.a. the "Loyal Five." Until the Black Sox scandal broke in the fall of 1920, the war between the Insurrectos and the Loyal Five was the biggest story in the game.

All parties ended up in court in the fall of 1919 to thrash things out. At the same time, Lannin and Frazee argued over who was responsible for Boston's \$30,000 share of the legal settlement with the Federal League -- in protest Frazee had stopped making his payments on the team. Lannin threatened to take Frazee to court and slap a lien on him. To protect



Babe Ruth could have remained a Boston idol if the Yankees had moved to Fenway Park.

his largest asset, the Red Sox, Frazee began a series of maneuvers to ensure that no matter what Johnson or Lannin did, they wouldn't be able to force him to dispose of his ballclub.

At the time Frazee purchased the Red Sox, it was erroneously reported that he had also bought Fenway Park. He had not. Frazee financial documents recently uncovered by the Frazee family and now held at the University of Texas reveal that the park remained in the hands of the Fenway Realty Trust, controlled by Charles Taylor of the Boston Globe Taylors. Taylor had owned the Sox from 1904 through 1911 and built Fenway in the first place. In recent years, Lannin had also been allowed to buy into the Trust. Frazee rented the park at \$30,000 a year.

Being a tenant of the Fenway Realty Trust put Frazee in a precarious position. If Johnson were ever to make good on his threat to revoke the franchise, it would be a simple matter for a new owner to procure a lease on Fenway. But if Frazee were to control Fenway, that would change everything. With no place to play, Johnson would have a hard time convincing another party to assume control of the Red Sox.

On August 1, 1919, Frazee began negotiations to buy Fenway Park from the Fenway Realty Trust. He filed a plan to refinance his purchase of the team that would simultaneously buy out the interests of Taylor and Lannin and place the team, the Trust, and Fenway Park firmly in Frazee's hands and out of the reach of Johnson.

In the meantime there was the question of Babe Ruth, whose pathetic performance and erratic behavior over the first two months of the 1919 season had cost the Red Sox any chance at repeating as champions. While he had rebounded to set a new home run record, he was trouble both in the clubhouse and off the field, agitating for a new manager, a new contract and special treatment. Frazee was out of patience.

But he wasn't out of money. The Red Sox had been profitable in 1919 and his new play, "My Lady Friends," was just beginning a run that would eventually last almost a year and was earning him \$3,000 a week. But lawyers cost money and the War between the Insurrectos and the Loyal Five limited Frazee's market -- the Loyal Five refused to deal with him at all. The White Sox offered him Joe Jackson (the Black Sox scandal had not broken wide open yet) and \$60,000 for Ruth but the Yankees trumped the White Sox with an offer of an even \$100,000. The Yankees were eager for a box-office draw to help them to compete in New York with the National League Giants and so they were willing to take a chance on the problematic star.

The Yankees took title to their prize on December 26, 1919. The transaction strengthened the and New York against Johnson and gave Frazee some ready cash if the legal battle heated up a lot of ballplayers, which is what Frazee said he intended to spend the money on.

In the spring of 1920 the war with Johnson turned increasingly bitter. The New York courts had backed Frazee and the Yankees at every turn, but now Lannin decided to take advantage of the situation. Lannin slapped a lien on Frazee's Massachusetts holdings, legally preventing Frazee from "disposing of any more of the playing assets," and threatening to sell his shares of the Fenway Realty Trust. That kept the door open for a new owner friendly to Johnson to buy part of Fenway, while restraining Frazee from using the proceeds of the Ruth sale to rebuild his ball club until their dispute was settled. Frazee countersued.

Lannin had Frazee over a barrel -- he couldn't make trades or buy Fenway without Lannin's OK. So Frazee settled. Both parties agreed to a stipulation that in essence meant that Frazee would complete his payments to Lannin for the Red Sox if Lannin would agree to pay the Federal League bill and allow Frazee to go ahead with his purchase of Fenway. The decks were now clear.

On May 3, Frazee and Taylor signed a purchase and sale for controlling interest in the Trust, paying off the existing



Harry Frazee, center, with two stars from the 1918 Red Sox, Stuffie McInnis (left) and Jack Barry.



Ban Johnson was American League president from 1901 until 1927.

mortgage and delivering ownership of Fenway to Frazee. Johnson's plans to get rid of Frazee were thwarted.

But Frazee wasn't finished. Within weeks he "flipped" the property, secretly securing a loan of \$350,000 from Jacob Ruppert and the Yankees, using a second mortgage on Fenway Park as collateral. In effect, the Yankees now owned Fenway Park.

Now Frazee's holdings were fully protected. The loan from Ruppert allowed Frazee to pay off all his remaining indebtedness in regard to the Red Sox without dipping into the money he held in reserve to operate his theatrical interests. Now Johnson couldn't touch him, his ballclub, or his ballpark.

Blocked from getting Frazee, Johnson now turned his ire toward the Yankees. He was nearly as eager to be rid of Ruppert and Huston as he was of Frazee, for the Yankees had been Boston's partner in the Mays deal and had taken Boston's side in the resulting legal battle. The battle with the Insurrectos had stripped him of most of his power. That left Johnson, aptly described by one associate as a man "who never forgets an enemy," with only revenge on his mind.

Ruth, of course, would be a huge success as a Yankee, cracking 54 home runs in 1920 and proving to be the biggest drawing card in the game. The Yankees, without a ballpark of their own, leased the Polo Grounds from the Giants. In 1920 they were outdrawing their landlords for the first time. Johnson sensed an opportunity.

The Yankees' lease of the Polo Grounds was up at the end of the season and plans for their own park were still far in the future. In mid-May of 1920, Johnson approached Giants owner Charles Stoneham and urged him to throw the Yankees out on their ear. That would leave Ruppert's Yankees homeless in 1921 and Johnson could force a sale. Johnson even promised Stoneham he could handpick the new owner.

Stoneham was intrigued. With Ruth, the Yankees were starting to hurt the Giants at the gate. If he could arrange for a crony to buy the team, well, that wouldn't be a problem anymore. He readily agreed, and informed the Yankees he would not renew their lease.

But neither Johnson nor Stoneham yet knew that the Yankees would soon have a place to play -- Fenway Park.

New York's threat was made possible on May 25, when the loan to Frazee went through. If Stoneham failed to renew their lease at the Polo Grounds, the Yankees had an option in 1921. They would simply play in their ballpark in Boston, creating the Boston Yankees.

Welcome back to Beantown, Babe.

Johnson, who stayed abreast of all important developments in the small world that was the American League, shuddered at the thought. The notion was fraught with uncertainty, such as the question of what would happen to Frazee's Red Sox. But if Johnson tried to stop them, a protracted round of lawsuits was inevitable, and Frazee and Ruppert had done nothing but win in the New York courts. There, they enjoyed every advantage -- New York Supreme Court justice Robert Wagner later served as Frazee's divorce attorney -- and Johnson didn't know the legal players without a scorecard. The situation promised to create a nightmare for Johnson and his league, both legally and in the court of public opinion.

Without explanation at the time, Stoneham suddenly got cold feet. He knew that if the Yankees left New York, he would be stuck without a tenant and made to look like the bad guy, the guy who'd forced the greatest player in the game out of town. Stoneham tossed Johnson aside and agreed to renew the Yankees' lease.

In a case of "Curses, foiled again," Johnson slunk off. The Yankees stayed in New York.

And for the second time, Boston lost Babe Ruth.

Start spreading the news.

