

Career Batting Records

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Career records are the ultimate extension of game and season performances and many of the names which surfaced in the earlier chapters will appear here as well. One name that has not been mentioned specifically is Cy Young. He was not a particularly good hitter, but because of his extremely long and active career he automatically established a number of career records that will probably never be broken.

Young, who split his long career evenly in the 19th and 20th centuries, had by far the most at bats as a pitcher, 2947, the most hits, 618, the most runs, 322, and unofficially the most runs batted in with 289. In spite of his large number of hits, he trailed Red Ruffing in doubles, 97 to 86, Walter Johnson in triples 41 to 34, and Wes Ferrell and many others in home runs 38 to 18. Old Cy played five games at first base in which he collected 4 hits in 11 trips, one a triple. He scored 3 runs and knocked in 1. His batting average as a pitcher was .210.

If the career records were restricted to the 20th century, Walter Johnson would lead in most cumulative categories, except for doubles, homers, and runs batted in. Ruffing had 273 RBIs, one for each of his 273 career pitching victories. Early Wynn was the pitcher to receive the most bases on balls, 141. He was a switch hitter. As a pitcher he gave up the most walks, 1775, so he was probably trying to get some of those back.

On batting average, we make a concession to the relief pitchers and those with short careers by including the hurlers with 200 to 500 at bats. Under this listing three hurlers topped the .300 percentage mark - Jack Bentley with .322, Ervin Brame, .306, and Babe Ruth, .304. They all batted lefthanded. Ironically, one other on the limited at bat list is Johnny Cooney, who was one of those unusual players who threw left and batted right. He later became an outfielder who played to an advanced age.

In the longer service category since 1900, the list is topped by George Uhle, .288, followed by Doc Crandall, .284, Red Lucas, .282, and Wes Ferrell, .280. See below.

Highest Career Batting Percentage Since 1900

200 to 500 At Bats

Period	Bat	Pitcher	AB	Hits	Ave.
1913-27	L	Jack Bentley	339	109	0.322
1928-32	L	ErvinBrame	396	121	0.306
1914-33	L	Babe Ruth	490	149	0.304
1901-04	L	Mike O'Neill	260	76	0.292
1919-30	L	Bill Bayne	214	62	0.290
1921-30	R	Johnny Cooney	236	68	0.288
1929-36	L	Chad Kimsey	206	58	0.282
1911-18	L	Earl Yingling	227	64	0.282
1901-03	R	LewWiltse	221	62	0.281

500 to 2000 At Bats

Period	Bat	Pitcher	AB	Hits	Ave.
1919-36	R	George Uhle	1363	393	0.288
1908-18	R	Doc Crandall	573	163	0.284

1923-38	L	Red Lucas	1388	392	0.282
1927-41	R	WesFerrell	1128	316	0.280
1895-09	L	Al Orth	1400	389	0.278
1916-29	L	Jack Scott	678	186	0.274
1949-60	R	Don Newcombe	878	238	0.271
1923-33	R	Hollis Thurston	648	175	0.270
1924-47	R	Red Ruffing	1932	520	0.269
1915-29	L	Carl Mays	1085	291	0.268
1894-03	R	Jim Callahan	682	181	0.267
1933-39	L	John Marcum	533	141	0.265
1902-15	R	George Mullin	1504	397	0.264
1933-49	R	Lynwood Rowe	909	239	0.263
1939-53	L	Fred Hutchinson	649	171	0.263
1894-11	B	JesseTannehill	1093	285	0.261
1922-34	L	Joe Shaute	657	170	0.259
1917-27	L	Dutch Ruether	947	245	0.259

The list of career home run leaders shows a ladder arrangement with all the top rungs taken. Wes Ferrell had 38 roundtrippers, Bob Lemon 37, Red Ruffing 36, and Warren Spahn and Earl Wilson 35. It then drops off to 29 for Don Drysdale, and 24 for three hurlers whose careers spanned much of the last 100 years - John Clarkson (1882-94), the early leader, Walter Johnson (1907-27), who led in the middle years, and Bob Gibson (1959-75), who led in the recent decade.

Although Ferrell and Lemon had the highest totals, neither had the best ratio of home runs to at bats. Jack Harshman hit fourbaggers most frequently in his brief career, followed by Earl Wilson and by Babe Ruth, who just squeezed on the list of hurlers hitting 15 or more. The at bats are carried as a guide to frequency. The career batting average is also shown to indicate that pitchers are not immune from swinging for the fences. Maybe they have a natural inclination to want to put the ball out of the park so they won't have to rush around the bases.

All those hurlers who have hit 15 or more career homers as a pitcher or pinch hitter since 1876 are listed below.

HOME RUNS BY PITCHERS, LIFETIME

Pitcher	Hr	AB	Bat.
WesFerrell	38	1128	0.280
Bob Lemon	37	1126	0.234
Red Ruffing	36	1932	0.269
Warren Spahn	35	1872	0.194
Earl Wilson	35	740	0.195
Don Drysdale	29	1169	0.187
Walter Johnson	24	2288	0.237
John Clarkson	24	1895	0.218
Bob Gibson	24	1328	0.206
Jack Stivetts	21	1287	0.297
Dizzy Trout	20	961	0.213

Milt Pappas	20	1073	0.123
Jack Harshman	19	384	0.182
Gary Peters	19	807	0.222
Cy Young	18	2947	0.210
Lynwood Rowe	18	909	0.263
Jim Tobin	17	794	0.230
Early Wynn	17	1704	0.214
Lefty Grove	15	1369	0.148
Jouett Meekin	15	1078	0.243
Babe Ruth	15	490	0.304
Hal Schumacher	15	893	0.202
Claude Passeau	15	982	0.192
Joe Nuxhall	15	766	0.198
John Antonelli	15	697	0.178
Don Newcombe	15	878	0.271
Pedro Ramos	15	703	0.157
Dick Donovan	15	694	0.163
Don Cardwell	15	698	0.135
Jim Kaat	15	1191	0.189
Rick Wise	15	585	0.207

Pitchers who hit home runs seem to have little in common with those who hit for a good average. This is reflected in the two lists carried above where only four names - Ferrell, Ruffing, Rowe and Newcombe - appear on both lists. Spahn and Wilson, who both hit 35 homers, and Drysdale, who hit 29, all hit under .200. Milt Pappas, who hit 20 homers, batted only .123.

One way to obtain the best combination of power and percentage is to focus on the slugging average, which relates at bats to total bases rather than to hits. Does this give too much weight to the home run hitter? Not for pitchers. Spahn and Drysdale did not even make the list of top sluggers because their low batting averages dragged them out of contention. On the other hand it accentuates the importance of a player like Ferrell who kept his batting average up while still hitting the long ball. He compiled a .451 slugging average as a pitcher, comfortably ahead of the other pitchers of the 20th century.

Most of the best hitting pitchers since 1900 are carried below with their career records in the important departments. Only those hurlers with more than 500 at bats are listed, and they are ranked by slugging average.

Pitcher	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Bat.	Slug.
WesFerrell	1128	169	316	55	12	38*	202	0.280	0.451*
Doe Crandall	573	77	163	23	15	8	91	0.284	0.419
Bob Lemon	1126	145	263	52	9	37	146	0.234	0.394
Red Ruffing	1932	207	520	97*	13	36	273*	0.269	0.389
George Uhle	1363	172	393	60	21	9	187	.288*	0.383
Hollis Thurston	648	65	175	38	10	5	79	0.270	0.383
Lynwood Rowe	909	116	239	36	9	18	153	0.263	0.382
Al Orth	1400	166	389	54	28	11	-	0.278	0.380
Tommy Byrne	601	73	143	26	8	14	98	0.238	0.378

Don Larsen	591	65	144	25	5	14	72	0.244	0.374
Earl Wilson	740	95	144	12	6	35	111	0.195	0.369
Don Newcombe	878	94	238	33	3	15	108	0.271	0.367
Claude Hendrix	921	118	221	39	17	13	97	0.240	0.362
Jack Scott	678	67	186	31	4	5	73	0.274	0.354
Red Lucas	1388	150	392	60	13	3	183	0.282	0.351
Carl Mays	1085	113	291	32	21	5	110	0.268	0.350
Gary Peters	807	86	179	31	7	19	102	0.222	0.348
Mickey McDermott	615	70	154	29	2	9	74	0.250	0.348
George Mullin	1504	162	397	70	23	3	135	0.264	0.347
Walter Johnson	2288*	234*	542*	93	41*	24	252	0.237	0.345

*Modern career record for hurler.