

## Scoresheet Baseball June 4th, 2007

Hello All: The number of injuries this year just won't slow down. Heck, Clemens is hurt and he hasn't even pitched in the majors yet. This has definitely been a season where having a deep team is a must.

Along with making trades, which can both be a lot of fun and is often required for filling holes caused by all the injuries, another important decision you make quite often during the season is deciding who starts for you, and who sits on the bench. As we've talked about in past years, there are 2 main methods I've seen owners use to decide who to put in their starting lineup. They are: **1)** Choosing to start guys based on their career stats (for example, continuing to start Pat Burrell despite his poor year so far), or **2)** Start guys based on what they have done so far THIS year, or even start the guys who are 'hot' that month. After all, if you have a guy who is apparently having his break out year you have to get him in the game! None of us ever likes to bench one of our top draft picks, for fear that this will be the week that he suddenly lives up to our high hopes. But players do have unexpected down years - at some point you may have to bite the bullet and admit that guys who are still under-performing as we enter June are just plain not going to have a great year.

Players in their prime (generally ages 27-31) do tend to live up to their career stats as the season goes on (this is especially true for hitters). But if you have an older player who has started slowly, then you may have to move him to the bench. Or if you have a young prospect that was highly touted, but is not living up to his potential, then you may have to decide you have him one year too early. I think an owner can make too many changes by overreacting to one hot or cold week, but occasional adjustments are necessary for most teams. In addition, setting batting orders, and deciding on reliever, bunt, steal and pinch hit strategies, also influences your *Scoresheet* won-loss record, which is one thing that sets *Scoresheet* apart from straight 'Rotisserie' games.

**More Stats:** Every couple of weeks we include with the weekly results what we call the 'Won-Loss Breakdown' stat table. (That table is also updated on the web site **every** week.) Some of these stats, such as record when behind after 7 innings, you probably cannot do much as a manager to change. But, if you notice that you are losing a lot of one run, or extra inning games, then maybe you should take a look at a couple of things. Stealing bases, along with sacrifice bunting, is a good way to manufacture one crucial run. I think sac bunting early in the game is a bad thing, as it greatly lowers your chances to have a big inning. But late in the game even your best hitters might help your team by laying down a bunt. On my team almost no hitter has an earliest inning to bunt

earlier than the 6th inning, but almost every hitter bunts by the 8th (except for my absolute couple best hitters.) Stealing bases also helps keep you out of double plays, and can also greatly increase your chance of scoring one run.

Once again - **your** managerial strategies can affect your won-loss record in *Scoresheet*. If you are leaving a lot of guys on base maybe you need to juggle your lineup. Try moving speedier guys in front of your big hitters, or putting high SlgAvg guys directly behind your best on-base percentage players. Having a reliable closer can also greatly improve your record in close games; and having a top set-up man or two has become crucial in these days of most starters only lasting 6 innings. If you have a great set-up guy and a reliable closer than you can have almost a perfect record when leading after 6 or 7 innings, which often translates into a pennant contending team.

**All-Star Effect:** We also include with the game report individual player's *Scoresheet* stats for all the teams in your league. The players shown are: each team's starting lineup vs. RHPs, the 5 pitchers they've listed in their rotation, and their closer. One thing this information should help demonstrate is that what we have learned to call the '**All-Star factor**' (having only 10-12 teams in most *Scoresheet* leagues, but 14 or 16 teams in each major league), which affects **all** team's individual player stats (not just your team's.)

This 'All-Star factor' is NOT something we designed into our program. It simply comes about because with smaller league sizes, your players in *Scoresheet* games are facing better opponents overall than they are in the majors. And because your players are facing better opponents in *Scoresheet*, their *Scoresheet* numbers will be somewhat worse than their major league numbers. After all, if a player faces nothing but better competition he is going to do worse than if he got to face lousy players. So, if you've noticed that your players are doing somewhat worse in *Scoresheet* than in the majors, then looking at the league-wide numbers should help comfort you with the knowledge that the same thing is happening to all the other teams in your league - every team is affected.

**Symbols note:** **GIDP** stands for Grounded into Double Plays, **OSB** stands for Opposition Stolen Bases (bad), and **OCS** stands for Opposition Caught Stealing (good). These last 2 stats are based on what the opposing basestealers did that week in the majors, and also on your catcher's throwing arm. Like fielding range, a catcher's throwing arm is based on what he did the last two years - which are the numbers printed next to his name in the draft packet.

Have a great week! - Jeff Barton