

Scoresheet Baseball June 5th, 2006

Hello All: Boy, top notch first basemen in the National League are taking a beating this year. Derrek Lee is hurt and projected to miss half the season, Pujols is now out for 3 to 6 weeks, Helton missed a few weeks earlier this year, Nomar missed the first month, Bagwell is apparently done forever, etc. etc. Heck, if a couple more good first basemen get hurt, my beloved Giants 1B tandem of Lance Niekro and Mark Sweeney might even start to look okay.

As I've said in past weeks, making and talking trades with fellow Scoresheet owners can be a great time, and is often necessary to fill holes. But 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 Richie Sexson 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: Last week we again printed what we call the 'Won-Loss Breakdown' stat table. (That table is also on the web site every week.) Some of these stats, such as record when behind after 7 innings, you probably can not 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 a 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 - moving speedier guys in front of your big hitters, or getting some RBI guys hitting directly behind your best on-base percentage players. Having a strong, reliable closer can also greatly improve your record in close games; and having a top set-up man has also seemed to work really well in the majors the last dozen years. 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: Every other week or so we also print 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 effects **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.

Have a great week! - Jeff Barton

P.S. You can get your **results by e-mail or** by postal mail. If you'd like to switch to e-mailed results just let us know (and also give us your e-mail address.) There is no extra charge to switch - the only extra charge would be if you wanted results **both** ways each week.