

Hello All: Proof that a seemingly good trade does not always help – the Giants get Hillenbrand and promptly lose 7 straight, getting swept by both Washington and Pittsburgh (not exactly teams that remind anyone of the 1927 Yankees.) Maybe Toronto was right that Hillenbrand was a clubhouse cancer? We'll have to work on programming personality plusses and minuses into the game simulation, eh?

With the major league trading deadline having passed, the amount of player movement in the majors will definitely slow down (except for the inevitable injuries plus a few minor league call ups.) So, it is probably a good time to evaluate your Scoresheet roster, and make sure you don't have any holes that need filling. The Scoresheet trading deadline is September 4th this year, so you have a full month to make deals to help position your team for the September playoff push (or for next year if you feel you are out of it this year, and are playing in a continuing league.) Best of luck in all your wheeling and dealing!

Strategy note: Players in a *Scoresheet* game can switch positions in mid-game, just like in real life. (Though just like in the majors, they have to stay in the same spot in the batting order.) This means you can do things like list a starter as a defensive sub at a different position. This happens most often when you start a guy in CF, and want a better fielder to come into CF late in the game, but you want your starting CFer to move to LF or RF, rather than have him come out of the game. For example, you could start Preston Wilson in CF, and also list Wilson as a defensive sub in RF or LF, and list someone with a better range (Mike Cameron for instance) as your defensive sub in CF. Then starting with the 8th inning, if you are ahead by 2 or more runs, Cameron would come into CF, and instead of leaving the game Wilson would take over for your lousier fielder in LF or RF, and that lousy fielder would leave the game.

Run Differential: Over the years many baseball studies have been done on how 'run differential' (the difference in runs scored versus runs allowed) relates to won-loss record. Given the interest in that subject we'd like to give our thoughts on run differential, and how it compares in Scoresheet to the majors.

Certainly scoring runs is a good thing for your offense, and giving up the fewest runs possible is the top goal of your pitchers and fielders. However, in both the majors and in *Scoresheet*, run differential is not a perfect measure of won-loss record. Some teams simply perform better in close games (maybe they have a better late inning bullpen, or maybe they have more speed and can manufacture that one crucial run, or maybe they are just plain lucky?), while other teams are set up to simply blow out the opponents

(often the teams who live and die by the HR, and so score in bunches).

In general a league's standings do roughly follow run differential. But there have been some pretty large differences between won-loss records and run differential in past major league pennant races, and also in *Scoresheet* races. And in *Scoresheet*, there are a couple of reasons why run differential is definitely a **worse** predictor of won-loss records than in the majors. There are a few more blowouts in *Scoresheet* than in the majors - use of AAA pitchers can really lead to some dismal scores! Also, in the majors, once a team gets way ahead they seem to quit trying as hard - the players want to get it over with. In *Scoresheet*, if your hitters are facing lousy pitching they are 'supposed' to get more hits, so they keep pounding away. Winning or losing a blow out (something like 18-2) only counts as one win or loss, but it can really distort a team's run differential.

Also, here is what **I always feel may be the biggest reason for won-loss records not matching up well with overall run differential:** if you have a *Scoresheet* team with 3 really good starting pitchers, and 2 horrible ones, you may win about 3 of 5 games, but there is a good chance your 2 lousy pitchers will lose by big scores, while your 3 good ones may be winning close games (meaning you'll have a bad run differential but a good won-loss record.) If you have a lot of HR hitters you may win a lot of blowouts, but in games where you don't hit HRs you may be losing a lot of close, low scoring affairs (meaning you'll have a good run differential but not necessarily a great record.) All of these reasons can help account for why your won-loss record can not be perfectly predicted by your runs.

Since in both *Scoresheet* and in the majors, it is won-loss record that determines who comes in first place, then W-L record is what you really care about. If you think your team should be winning more games then take a look at the various stats we print each week with the standings, or the 'won-loss' breakdown table we printed every two or three weeks, and see if there is some subtle things other teams are doing that you seem to be lacking in (steals, sacrifices, saves?) Winning or losing close games does involve some luck, but managerial strategies, and the kind of team you put together, do matter a lot. For instance, having no good closer can really hurt in the close one run games in the ninth inning.

Quickies: 1) An **F** on the scoresheets stands for failed sacrifice bunt - the batter is out and the runners stay where they are.

2) When looking for a sub for your DH (or for your 1B if you have no one on the bench with 1B listed as a position or who qualifies at 1B), we start players based on their PH rank. So, unlike all of the other positions, if you need a sub DH to start we do NOT

look for a guy on the bench you have listed at DH,
instead we simply take the guy with the best PH rank.

3) OP stands for Outstanding Play, and is based on a
player's fielding range – the better the range the more
outstanding plays that player will make over the course
of the season.

Have a winning week! - Jeff Barton