

The Leading Home Run Hitters for each Decade

Home Run Trivia

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Sandlot Stats

Learning Statistics with Baseball Chapter 11

The interesting facts following **Chapter 11** cover the most exciting baseball outcome, the home run.

Home Run Facts

- Babe Ruth is considered by some the greatest home run hitter of all-time. One reason for this is, in 1927 when he hit 60 home runs; this total was greater than the total number of home runs hit by 12 of the other 15 teams in the Major Leagues.
- The table below gives the player who hit the most number of home runs in each of the decades from 1900 to 1999.

Decade	Player	Total Number of Home Runs for the Decade
1900s	Harry Davis	67
1910s	Gavvy Cravath	116
1920s	Babe Ruth	467
1930s	Jimmie Foxx	415
1940s	Ted Williams	234
1950s	Duke Snider	326
1960s	Harmon Killebrew	393
1970s	Willie Stargell	296
1980s	Mike Schmidt	313
1990s	Mark McGuire	404

2000s ????

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Who is your pick for 2000 to 2009?

- Mark McGuire hit his 400th home run and his 500th home run in consecutive years (1998 and 1999). Can you find another player who achieved the same feat?
- Mark McGuire holds the rookie record for home runs when he hit 49 in 1987.
- The three players who hit a home run as a teenager and also after the age of 40 are Ty Cobb, Rusty Staub, and Gary Sheffield.
- The youngest player to hit at least 40 home runs in a season in the 20th Century was Ed Matthews when hit 47 home runs for the Braves in 1953 at age of 21.
- The only player to homer in his first two plate appearances in the World Series was Gene Tenace of the Oakland Athletics in 1972.
- In 1918, Babe Ruth hit a ball over the fence but was not credited with a home run. The reason was that it was hit in the bottom of the ninth inning with a man on first base and the score tied. The rule then was when the winning run scored the game was over. Under present day rules, it would have been a home run. The rule was changed in 1920.
- Henry Aaron lost a home run in 1965 when it was pointed out by the catcher that his back foot was out of the batter's box when he took his stance.
- In the at-bat before Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth's career home run record, he topped Mays' National League record for runs scored. Aaron began the 1974 season with 2,060 runs scored, two runs behind Mays. On April 14 at Cincinnati, Aaron tied Ruth by hitting his 714th home run. He also scored two runs in that game to pull even with Mays. On April 18 in Atlanta, Aaron walked and scored a run in the second inning to pass Mays and then broke Ruth's record by hitting a home run in the fourth inning.
- In the dead-ball era of 1910-1919, Gavvy Cravath played for the Phillies. He won six home run titles. In 1915, he slammed a remarkable 24 home runs. What was remarkable was this number of home runs was more than 10% of the National League total.
- In 1902, the National League leader Tommy Leach had six home runs; all of them were inside-the-park jobs.
- World War II depleted the baseball talent. In 1945, the Washington Senators hit only 27 home runs as a team. Only one of those home runs was hit in their home park.
- In 1919, the last year of the dead-ball era, Babe Ruth hit 29 home runs breaking the

season home run record of 24, held by Cravath.

- Ken Caminiti, Todd Hundley, and Mickey Mantle are the only switch-hitters to hit at least 40 home runs in a season.
- Bernie Williams and Jorge Posada are the only teammates to hit home runs from each side of the plate in the same game. This feat occurred on April 23, 2000 against the Toronto Blue Jays.
- In 2008, Alex Rodriguez completed his 12th season with at least 100 RBIs and 35 home runs breaking Babe Ruth's record by one year.

The Long and the Short of It

Longest Home Runs

Two of the most intriguing questions asked by baseball fans are: Who hit the longest home run in the history of baseball? How far did the longest home run travel in the air? Unfortunately, the answer to these questions is unknown. One approach to these questions is to identify players who have hit home runs which were believed to travel over 450 feet. In what follows, we will provide some of these power hitters who are believed to have accomplished this feat. We will only consider players from 1900 on. At the end of the discussion we will propose our answers to these questions.

It should be noted that many of these estimates of distances traveled by home runs has been disputed. Home runs hit out of stadiums may have been measured after rolling great distances. In 1982, IBM introduced a computerized measuring system for most of the stadiums. By 1995, all stadiums had a computerized measuring device.

Babe Ruth

- In the dead-ball era, on July 21, 1915, Ruth hit the first confirmed tape measure home run. This home run was hit over the right field bleachers and was measured at 470 feet.
- On June 8, 1926, his home run cleared the right field stands in Detroit. Legend has it that the ball traveled over 600 feet. This could not be confirmed.
- In 1921, legend has it that Ruth hit a home run of 500 feet in each of the eight American

League stadiums.

- On August 16, 1927, Ruth's home run cleared the right field 52-foot-wide grandstand at Comiskey Park by a considerable margin. Such a drive is estimated to have traveled close to 575 feet.

Jimmie Foxx

- In 1932, Foxx hit 58 home runs. Many of these home runs traveled over 450 feet.
- Foxx was considered Ruth's successor for tape measure home runs.

Ted Williams

- In 1960, Ted hit a home run at Washington's Griffith Stadium which traveled over 475 feet.

Mickey Mantle

- Mantle was a switch hitter with equal power from both sides of the plate. He is one of the few players in the history of baseball with tape measure home runs in all directions.
- Many baseball people believe Mickey Mantle's home run off of Chuck Stoobs on April 17, 1953 was the longest home run ever hit. It traveled 565 feet at Griffith Stadium in Washington D.C. It was this home run which was responsible for the term "*tape measure shot*".
- On September 10, 1960, Mantle hit a home run at Detroit's Tiger Stadium, which traveled an estimated 643 feet.
- On May 22, 1963, Mantle hit a home run to right field in Yankee Stadium which hit the façade. The controversy was whether the ball was rising or falling at the time of impact. If the ball was rising, it is estimated that it would have gone over 620 feet. No fair ball has ever been hit out of Yankee Stadium. This shot by Mantle was the closest a player came to hitting a ball fair out of Yankee Stadium.

Joe Adcock, Lou Brock, Henry Aaron

- All three of these players are credited with hitting a home run into the centerfield bleachers in the Polo Grounds. What makes these home runs tape measure shots is the centerfield bleachers were 473 feet from home plate. It is believed that these were the only three players to accomplish this feat. An interesting fact is that Brock and Aaron hit their home runs on successive nights in 1963. Adcock hit his home run in 1953.

Mark McGwire

- The modern day most powerful home run hitter was Mark McGwire. In 1998, when he hit 70 home runs, five of his home runs were measured over 500 feet. The longest was measured at 545 feet.

Barry Bonds

- In 2001, when Barry Bonds hit his record 73 home runs, none were measured at over 500 feet. The longest was measured at 480 feet.

Which Home Run is considered the Longest?

I will go along with the conclusions of the “Guinness Book of World Records”. According to this source of records:

- “Mickey Mantle’s home run on April 17, 1953 hit at Griffith Stadium which traveled 565-feet is considered the longest home run ever measured.”
- “Guinness also notes that Mickey’s 643-foot homer hit at Detroit’s Tiger Stadium on September 10, 1960 is the longest home run measured mathematically after the fact.”

The Shortest Home Run

The Federal League was formed for the years 1914 to 1915. This league was to compete with the existing American and National Leagues. At the end of 1915 the Federal League folded.

However, its statistics are included in the Major League statistics.

- In a Federal League game played in 1914 there was only one umpire. He stationed himself behind the pitcher. Instead of keeping extra balls in a pocket he stacked the balls behind the pitcher. A batter hit a ball right into the pile, scattering the balls in all directions. Not knowing what to do the batter circled the bases. The fielders grabbed the scattered balls, tagging the batter with any ball they could find. Since the umpire could not determine which ball was the actual batted ball, he awarded the batter a home run. The home run ball traveled only 70 feet.

Grand Slam Home Runs

Two Grand Slams in One Game

- A total of 12 players have hit two grand slam home runs in one game.
- On May 24, 1936, Tony Lazzeri of the New York Yankees was the first player to hit two grand slams in one game.
- Bill Mueller, a switch hitter, on July 29, 2003, hit one grand slam from the right side and the other grand slam from the left side. In that game he actually hit three home runs driving in nine runs.
- Tony Cloninger, **a pitcher**, on July 3, 1966, hit two grand slams in his first and second at-bats.
- On April 23, 1999, playing for St. Louis, Fernando Tatis hit two grand slams in the same inning off the same pitcher.
- Currently, the last player to hit two grand slams in one game is Bill Mueller on July, 29, 2003.

Robin Ventura

- Robin Ventura hit 18 grand slams in his career. His total number of career home runs is 294. He is the only player with at least 13 grand slams who did not hit 300 home runs in his career. Joe Rudi and Rudy York had 12 grand slams and less than 300 home runs.
- Currently Robin is 4th in career grand slams. Lou Gehrig (23), Manny Ramirez (20) and Eddie Murray (19) are ahead of Ventura.
- On September 4, 1995, Robin hit two grand slams for the Chicago White Sox in one game. On May 20, 1999, playing for the Mets, he hit two grand slams on the same day in a doubleheader, one in each game.

Lou Gehrig

- Gehrig holds the career record with 23 grand slam home runs.

Don Mattingly

- In 1987, Mattingly hit a record six grand slam home runs, Interestingly, these were the

only grand slams in his 14-year career. In 1987, Mattingly also set the record of eight consecutive games with a home run. Two of the grand slams were part of that streak.

Four Home Runs in One Game

A total of 15 players have hit four home runs in one game. Five of the players did it in the American League and ten of the players did it in the National League.

- Of the 15 players, five have been admitted to the Hall of Fame. They are Lou Gehrig (06/03/1932), Ed Delahanty (07/13/1896), Chuck Klein (07/10/1936), Willie Mays (04/30/1961), and Mike Schmidt (04/17/1976). The seven other players are Bobby Lowe (05/30/1894), Pat Seery (07/18/1948), Gil Hodges (08/31/1950), Joe Adcock (07/31/1954), Rocky Colavito (06/10/1959), Bob Horner (07/06/1986), Mike Whitten (09/07/1993), Mike Cameron (05/02/2002), Shawn Green (05/23/2002), Carlos Delgado (09/25/2003).
- Since 2000, three players have done it. They include Shawn Green (05/23/2002), Mike Cameron (05/02/2002), and Carlos Delgado (09/25/2003).
- The RBIs received during a four home run game ranged from four (Cameron) to twelve (Mark Whitten).
- Lowe, Cameron, Colavito, Delgado, Gehrig, and Schmidt hit their four home runs consecutively.

Home Run in First At-Bat

- A total of 99 players hit a home run in their first at-bat in the majors.
- The first player to do it was Luke Stuart (08/08/1921).
- As of the end of the 2008 season, of the 99 players, for 11 of them it was their only career home run.
- Hoyt Wilhelm, a knuckleball pitcher, hit a home run during his first at-bat then had a twenty-one year career without hitting another home run.
- Kevin Kouzmanoff (09/02/2006) was the first player to hit a grand slam home run on his

first pitch in his first at-bat in the majors.

Home Run in Final At-Bat

Forty one players hit a home run in their last at-bat in the majors.

- Todd Zeile owns the MLB record of hitting a home run for the most different teams. His 253 home runs were spread among 11 different teams – St Louis (75), Chicago Cubs (9), Philadelphia Phillies (20), Los Angeles Dodgers (38), Florida Marlins (6), Texas (30), New York Mets (41), Colorado (18), New York Yankees (6), Baltimore (5), and Montreal (5). **Zeile's final home run was also the last homer given up by a Montreal Expo pitcher. In his last at-bat of his career, Zeile connected off of Claudio Vargas in the sixth inning of the Mets 8-1 victory over Montreal at Shea Stadium.** The Montreal Expos moved to Washington D.C. for the 2005 season and changed their name to the Washington Nationals.
- The most famous player to achieve this was Ted Williams. His final home run was hit on September 28, 1960.

Home Run in First and Last At-Bat

- John Miller hit only two home runs in 61 at-bats. However, his first home run came in his first at-bat and his last home run came in his last at-bat. The first home run came playing for the Yankees in 1966. His last home run came playing for the Dodgers in 1969.

Home Run Hitters who did not Strike Out

- Joe DiMaggio hit 361 home runs in his career but struck out only 369 times.
- The only slugger in the 20th century to hit more than 50 home runs and strike out less than 50 times was Johnny Mize in 1947, He hit 51 homers and struck out 42 times.
- Seven players have hit at least 40 home runs and struck out 40 times or less.
- Ted Kluszewski hit at least 40 home runs and struck out 40 or less times for three straight years. In 1953, he hit 40 home runs and struck out 34 times; in 1954, he hit 49 home runs

and struck out 35 times; and in 1955, he hit 47 home runs and struck out 40 times.

**The Greatest Power Hitters that were Contact Hitters:
Best Career Strikeout to Home Run Ratio (Minimum of 250 HR)
Through 2007**

Ratios (SO to HR)	Player's Name	Strikeouts	Home Runs
1.02	Joe DiMaggio	369	361
1.16	Yogi Berra	414	358
1.31	Ted Kluszewski	365	279
1.36	Ted Williams	709	521
1.46	Johnny Mize	524	359
1.47	Stan Musial	696	475
1.60	Lou Gehrig	790	493
1.60	Albert Pujols	452	282
1.74	Chuck Klein	521	300
1.75	Mel Ott	896	511
1.83	Henry Aaron	1383	755
1.86	Babe Ruth	1330	714
2.02	Barry Bonds	1539	762
2.03	Ralph Kiner	749	369
2.07	Vladimir Guerrero	813	392
2.25	Gary Sheffield	1125	499
2.26	Rogers Hornsby	679	301
2.31	Willie Mays	1526	660
2.35	Rocky Colavito	880	374
2.37	Rafael Palmeiro	1348	569
2.61	Todd Helton	810	310

Notice the four leading characters of this book, Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Henry Aaron, and Barry Bonds, all appear on this list. The name that surprises me is Yogi Berra being number two on the list.