

Tigers Stripes

The Newsletter of the
D
Mayo Smith Society

Vol. 32, No. 5

Tigers Fans Who Always Care

July 2016

OFFENSIVE STATUS -- By David Raglin

It's been a teeter-totter, up-and-down, close-to-.500 season for the Detroit Tigers, 38-38 after a discouraging three-game sweep at home at the hands of the first-place Cleveland Indians. Before that, just to emphasize the up-and-down nature of the season, they lost the last three games of a four-game series against Kansas City, then swept four against Seattle. The Mariners series gave the Tigers optimism, but even Justin Verlander could not hold off the Indians in the final game of the series.

Let's take a quick look at the offense and pitching/defense. Through the first two games against Cleveland, they had averaged 4.72 runs per game, sixth in the league and about a quarter of a run above the league average of 4.50. Unfortunately, they had allowed 4.80 runs per game, 14th in the league. We are not going to focus on the pitching this issue; we think you all know how bad it's been, but we do want to point out one thing: It's about equally a problem between the starters and the relievers. The starters have a 4.58 ERA and the bullpen has a 4.47 ERA.

Let's look at the hitting a bit more, though. Part of the problem the last few years is that the Tigers had about equal numbers of good and bad hitters. As you can see below, that is not quite as true this year:

Detroit Tigers Hitters, Through June 25, 2016

Tiger Hitter	BA	OBP	SLG	RC	RC/G	Name	BA	OBP	SLG	RC	RC/G
Miguel Cabrera	.296	.371	.526	55	6.8	Cameron Maybin	.349	.408	.411	23	6.8
Ian Kinsler	.297	.352	.495	55	6.7	Jarrod Saltalamacchia	.192	.312	.417	17	4.7
Nick Castellanos	.296	.332	.509	48	6.4	Steven Moya	.322	.365	.610	13	8.5
J.D. Martinez	.286	.358	.520	45	6.2	James McCann	.207	.250	.343	12	2.7
Victor Martinez	.316	.363	.508	45	6.5	Anthony Gose	.209	.287	.341	9	3.2
Justin Upton	.234	.295	.385	31	3.8	Mike Aviles	.218	.253	.241	5	1.8
Jose Iglesias	.259	.317	.336	25	3.6	Andrew Romine	.185	.279	.222	4	2.3

Six of the nine regulars are having excellent seasons, creating more than six runs per game (RC/G greater or equal to six), which means that a team made up of entirely of each of those players would score more than six runs a game.

The one thing this year that is similar to the past few seasons is a lack of players in the middle range of RC/G. Once you get past the top six regulars, the other regulars (Upton, Iglesias and McCann) are below four runs created per game. In a league that averages 4.5 runs per game, that is not good.

The good news is that Upton is starting to be more productive. The Tigers will need that since we cannot expect all six of those players to stay healthy (as we know, we are already down one, as J.D is on the disabled list until late July), and the bench is very weak. General Manager Al Avila has already let us know there will not be any big prospects-for-stars deals this year (a stance we agree with), but maybe he can replace weak bench players like Mike Aviles and Andrew Romine.

INTRODUCING THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE -- By Mark Pattison and David Raglin

After a couple of false starts, we are hereby announcing the debut of the Society's first-ever website. We unveiled it during the June 25 Annual Gathering, but you can see it for yourself: It's www.mayosmithsociety.org -- our name (all one word) -- plus the ".org" extender. We want this to be the go-to

site not only for Society members, but for Tigers fans of all types. And who knows, maybe they'll want to join, too!

The mayosmithsociety.org site will have links to all sorts of useful baseball-related sites. We'll also have for the world to see the origins and history of the Society, information about our namesake, a blog for articles and essays about the Tigers, and one of its most important features: the ability to join or rejoin the Society online. We'll also have back issues of *Tigers Stripes* for you to peruse at your leisure; after all, we've got more than 30 years' worth of them saved up.

One of the critical features of the site is the blog. It's what we believe will make members and soon-to-be-members alike want to return to mayosmithsociety.org over and over again. We're likewise interested in any contributions you may want to make to this blog. To be honest, we're veering in the direction of historically based pieces — and naturally, the Tigers are in our wheelhouse, but we'd also consider articles about Detroit's minor leaguers, minor league baseball in Michigan, the old National League Detroit Wolverines and Negro League ball in Detroit and Michigan. All we ask is that your submissions be truthful and factual — that is, of course, you had in mind writing some baseball fiction! Your work will be in the hands of the *Tigers Stripes* crew, which includes a professional statistician (Dave) and a professional journalist (Mark).

Even if you never write a word for the website, we want you to enjoy it as a reader and as a Society member. We're not completely there yet, but when we do get there, you'll want to bookmark it on your computer for ready reference.

TIGERS BOOKSHELF: "The Tigers and Yankees in '61" – Review by Mark Pattison

I can't declare that I followed the 1961 American League pennant race between Detroit and New York and can offer I-was-there perspectives in reviewing Jim Sargent's new book. However, I started following baseball in 1962. One of the elements, though, was expecting the Tigers to be far above average and to avenge the hated Yankees. (Some things never change, do they?)

But "The Tigers and Yankees in '61" — with the lengthy subtitle "A Pennant Race for the Ages, the Babe's Record Broken and Stormin' Norman's Greatest Season" — encapsulates the drama of that season and the giddy excitement Detroiters must have felt at being in their first real quest for flag in more than a decade.

Sargent may be a native of Flint, Mich., and his loyalties may forever be with the Tigers, but he mostly pulls off being even-handed in this book. Al Kaline, the boyhood idol of a generation of Detroit kids growing up, isn't anywhere close to being the star of this book. On the Old English "D" side, it's Norm Cash and Rocky Colavito. For the Bronx Bombers, it's Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle. In recounting the key games in what may well have been the finest season in the careers of all four players, Sargent's game accounts show the relentless pace these guys added to their numbers. It reminded me of the old Goodyear car and truck production billboard with its continuously moving "odometer" overlooking the interchange of the Ford and Chrysler freeways in Detroit.

Enlarging the size of major league baseball hadn't been tried in nearly a half-century with the arrival of the short-lived Federal League, so nobody could say for sure what the result would be of adding two teams to the AL -- not to mention eight games to the season. Short answer: Pitching suffered more than offense. Maris socked 61 home runs and Mantle 55 after wear, tear and bad medical advice cost The Mick dearly down the stretch. Cash (and his corked bats) had a career year in 1961, hitting .361 with 41 homers and 132 RBIs, leading the loop in on-base percentage, OPS and intentional walks. The Rock responded with 45 homers and 140 RBIs playing every one of Detroit's 163 (you read that right) games. Kaline's .324 batting average was second in the league, but his 19 homers and 82 ribbies were afterthoughts by comparison. But don't let the barrage of numbers scare you away from reading this book. There are plenty of good yarns here.

Tigers manager Bob Scheffing put faith in rookies Jake Wood and Steve Boros to play second and third base all season. After Boros broke his collarbone when Frank Lary collided with him when chasing down a bunt, sidelining him for six weeks, another rookie, Dick McAuliffe, filled in nicely. On the mound, Frank Lary (23-9, 22 complete games) and Don Mossi (13-7) had perhaps their greatest seasons. Jim Bunning (17-11) was his Hall of Fame self, and Paul Foytack was a reliable fourth starter, with swingman Phil Regan (10-7) and reliever Terry Fox (1.41 ERA) offering a glimpse of what they would be capable of further down the road.

"The Tigers and Yankees in '61" peters out when the Tigers do. Down 1.5 games heading to New York for a Labor Day weekend showdown against the Yankees, the Tigers drop all three games – followed by being swept in Baltimore at the hands of the Orioles. Detroit dropped 11 games off the pace at one point in the season's final month before rebounding near the end when it didn't matter.

These days, no team would win 100 or more games and be denied a spot in the postseason. This happened to be Detroit's second (1915, Boston took the crown).

"The Tigers and Yankees in '61" retails for \$35 and is available online from the publisher, McFarland Publications, at www.mcfarlandpub.com

ANNUAL GATHERING RECAP – By Mark Pattison

This year's Annual Gathering, held June 25 at the Hockeytown Café, may well have stretched the limits of the restaurant's Celebration Room, as 140 Mayoites squeezed in to hear tales spun by Tigers great Mickey Lolich and Society co-founders Dale Petroskey, Dennis Petroskey and Bill Mackay, not to mention a presentation by Tom Stanton on his new book, "Terror in the City of Champions" (look for a review here soon).

Lolich told how he had retired from baseball in 1962 after refusing a demotion to Double-A ball after he had gotten regularly shelled following a harrowing line drive off his left cheekbone near his eye, and the most unusual road back he took to playing once more. He also talked about his career pinnacle of the 1968 World Series: three victories – one in spite of not having been fully warmed up before starting Game 5 – and his Game 2 home run (the only homer he ever hit in the majors), which he dubbed "The Miracle at Busch Stadium." Our "The Mick" has little taste for certain changes in the game: the introduction of the designated hitter, five-man pitching rotations, and relief specialists. "Relievers were always failed starters," he declared. Even a starter not at his best, Lolich added, was better in his day than any reliever his manager might put in, and often argued with the skipper on the mound about the possibility of being pulled.

Society Administrator Todd Miller moderated the Mayo founders panel. Dale Petroskey told one story of the extremely early days of the Society, when Democratic lawmakers who loved the Tigers could summon Republican congressional aides to their offices just so they could talk baseball. But in this non-political instance, the Society hadn't yet established its post office box in Northville, Mich., so his home address in Alexandria, Va., served as the mailing address. While he and his wife were working in the backyard one Saturday, a touristy looking couple came to their door. "Is this the Mayo Smith Society?" they asked. Dale answered, well, yes – perhaps a bit guardedly. What would they like to know? The reply was a stunner: "We planned our vacation around a visit to the world headquarters of the Mayo Smith Society."

One of the beautiful things about having a website (see story in this issue) means that these won't be the only tales told for the benefit of Smithers. Look for more from the Petroskey brothers, Mackay and Lolich on the Mayo website before the summer is out.

TIGERS TRIVIA MAYO-STYLE – By Todd Miller

At each year's Annual Gathering, we prepare a trivia quiz for the Society faithful. This year's event ran so long there was no time to check the answers. Even with 140 members in attendance, that still leaves nearly five times as many who never even got the questions. So we're reprinting the quiz (and the answers) here.

1. How many career home runs did Mickey Lolich hit?
A. 0; B. 1; C. 2; D. 3
2. Besides the Tigers, for which pair of teams did Mickey play?
A. Cubs and Cardinals; B. Mets and Phillies; C. Mets and Padres; D. Padres and Expos
3. How many games did Mickey win in the '68 World Series?
A. 1; B. 2; C. 3; D. 4
4. Which '84 Tiger wore the same uniform number as The Mick?
A. Dave Bergman; B. Aurelio Lopez; C. Johnny Grubb; D. Darrell Evans
5. Immediately after managing the Tigers, which team did Billy Martin pilot?
A. Texas Rangers; B. New York Yankees; C. Minnesota Twins; D. Oakland A's
6. Each of these Tigers has won AL batting titles EXCEPT:

- A. Ty Cobb; B. Harry Heilmann; C. Miguel Cabrera; D. Alan Trammell
7. Before Miguel Cabrera won the Triple Crown in 2012, who was the last American Leaguer to win that award?
A. Carl Yastrzemski; B. Frank Robinson; C. Joe “Ducky” Medwick; D. Robin Yount
8. In 1987, Tigers manager Brad Ausums was drafted out of Dartmouth College by which organization?
A. Houston Astros; B. San Diego Padres; C. New York Yankees; D. Boston Red Sox
9. Tigers manager Hughie “Ee-Yah” Jennings (1907-20) earned a law degree from which Ivy League school?
A. Johns Hopkins; B. Cornell; C. New York University; D. Haverford
10. Who hit the walkoff home run that gave the Tigers the 2006 AL pennant?
A. Placido Polanco; B. Carlos Guillen; C. Ivan “Pudge” Rodriguez; D. Magglio Ordonez
11. In Game 7 of the ’68 Series, whose seventh inning triple broke a scoreless tie?
A. Gates Brown; B. Norm Cash; C. Jim Northrup; D. Al Kaline
12. Which Tigers pitcher bested Cleveland’s Bob Feller to clinch the 1940 pennant?
A. Elden Auker; B. Floyd Giebell; C. Tommy Bridges; D. Hal Newhouser
13. Which team beat the Tigers in the 1940 World Series?
A. St. Louis Cardinals; B. Cincinnati Reds; C. Chicago Cubs; D. Brooklyn Dodgers
14. In what year was the Mayo Smith Society founded?
A. 1968; B. 1984; C. 1987; D. 1983
15. Each of these players was part of the Tigers’ G-Men lineup in 1934 EXCEPT?
A. Charlie Gehringer; B. Hank Greenberg; C. Johnny Grabowski; D. Goose Goslin
16. In 1972, these pitchers comprised part of the Tigers’ AL East-winning starting rotation EXCEPT:
A. Denny McLain; B. Mickey Lolich; C. Joe Coleman; D. Woodie Fryman
17. Where did Tigers shortstop Harvey Kuenn play college baseball?
A. University of Michigan; B. Indiana University; C. University of Wisconsin; D. Michigan State University
18. Mickey Lolich is the all-time Tigers leader in career starts (459). Who’s second?
A. Jack Morris; B. Justin Verlander; C. Hal Newhouser; D. Jim Bunning
19. Which pair of pitchers has won 3 games each in a single World Series?
A. Orel Hershiser & Mickey Lolich; B. Bob Gibson & Jim Palmer; C. Mickey Lolich & Randy Johnson; D. Madison Bumgarner & Mickey Lolich
20. Which ballparks opened the same year as Comerica Park (2000)?
A. Camden Yards and Chase Field; B. Progressive Field and U.S. Cellular Field; C. Safeco Field and Tropicana Field; D. Minute Maid Park and AT&T Park

TIE-BREAKER: Off of whom did Mickey Lolich hit his lone career home run, in Game 2 of the ’68 World Series? Hint: He was a member of the Pirates’ starting rotation when the Bucs won the ’71 Series.

Answer key: 1-B, 2-C, 3-C, 4-B, 5-A, 6-D, 7-A, 8-C, 9-B, 10-D, 11-C, 12-B, 13-B, 14-D, 15-C, 16-A, 17-C, 18-A, 19-C, 20-D. Tie Breaker: Nelson (Nellie) Briles.

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