

A Schott From The Bleachers

Rarest of All: Unassisted Triple Plays

by

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From 1876 through 2002, some 174,857 major league games were played. In that vast number of games, a grand total of 11 unassisted triple plays were made, including one in a World Series contest.

Atlanta shortstop Rafael Furcale's unassisted triple play on August 10, 2003 in St. Louis was the twelfth occurrence of baseball's rarest play. With runners on first and second, Furcal leaped to catch a liner off the bat of Cardinals' pitcher Woody Williams, then tagged out both base runners, Mike Matheny and Orlando Palmeiro, who were running on the pitch.

Based on history, when you attend a major league game your chances of witnessing an unassisted triple play are about one in 14,572.

Unassisted Triple Plays	
Player, Team	Date
Paul Hines, Providence	May 8, 1878
Neal Ball, Cleveland	July 19, 1909
Bill Wambsganass, Cleveland	October 10, 1920
George Burns, Boston	September 14, 1923
Ernie Padgett, Boston	October 6, 1923
Glenn Wright, Pittsburgh	May 7, 1925
Jimmy Cooney, Chicago	May 30, 1927
Johnny Neun, Detroit	May 31, 1927
Ron Hansen, Washington	July 29, 1968
Mickey Morandini, Philadelphia	September 23, 1992
John Valentin, Boston	July 15, 1994
Randy Velarde, Oakland	May 29, 2000
Rafael Furcale, Atlanta	August 10, 2003

Despite the rarity of such a play, unassisted triple plays occurred on consecutive days on May 30th and 31st of 1927 by the Cubs' Jimmy Cooney and the Tigers' Johnny Neun. After Neun's, over 41 years passed before the major leagues saw another unassisted triple play.

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