



Hidden Talent in the Hall of Fame

by

S. Derby Gisclair

Member, Society for American Baseball Research



We are all familiar with the fact that the majority of the pitchers who have been elected to Cooperstown would have batting statistics as they were required to bat prior to the establishment of the Designated Hitter position in the American League. But how many of the hitters residing in the Hall of Fame would you expect to have a pitching record?

You might be surprised to learn that nearly fifteen percent have a pitching record. That's twenty hitters out of one hundred and thirty-four, a reasonably surprising number. They are *(listed alphabetically)*:

Wade Boggs	Stan Musial
Roger Bresnahan	Jim O'Rourke
Dan Brouthers	Sam Rice
Jesse Burkett	Babe Ruth
Ty Cobb	George Sisler
George Davis	Tris Speaker
Buck Ewing	Honus Wagner
Jimmie Foxx	Bobby Wallace
Harry Hooper	John M. Ward
George Kelly	Ted Williams

This is quite an eclectic group to be sure.

Wade Boggs

Never considered much of a minor league prospect, Boggs nonetheless evolved into a prodigious hitter with the Boston Red Sox (1982 – 1992), the New York Yankees (1993 – 1997), and his hometown Tampa Bay Devil Rays (1998 – 1999). He made two appearances on the mound, once in 1997 with the Yankees and again in 1999 with Tampa Bay. He faced a total of 11 batters in 2-1/3 innings, giving up 3 hits, 1 walk and 1 run while chalking up 2 strikeouts. Boggs was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2005 with 91.9% of the BBWAA first ballot vote.

Roger Bresnahan

Bresnahan enjoyed 17 seasons in major league baseball between 1897 and 1915. During three of those campaigns he took the mound for his club – in 1897 for the Washington Senators, in 1901 for the Baltimore Orioles, and in 1910 for the St. Louis Cardinals. In nine appearances he compiled a 4 – 1 record over a total of 50-1/3 innings pitched. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1945 by the Veterans Committee.



Dan Brouthers

Breaking in with the Troy in the National League in 1879, Big Dan pitched 3 games for the Trojans, posting a 0 – 2 record with a 5.57 ERA. He returned to the mound four years later for the Buffalo Bisons, giving up 9 hits and 7 runs during his 2 innings of work. He returned to his normal position at first base and continued his career as a fearsome hitter, compiling a .342 career batting average over 19 seasons.

Jesse Burkett

Dividing his time between the mound and the outfield, Burkett broke in with the New York Giants in 1890. He made 21 appearances, posted a 3 – 10 record while batting .309 for his rookie season. He was with Cleveland when he returned to the hump in 1894 to pitch 4 innings, giving up 6 hits and two runs. Eight years would pass before Burkett returned to pitch for the St. Louis Browns in 1902. He was touched up for 4 runs on 4 hits during a single inning. He would vat over .400 three times, a feat duplicated only by Ty Cobb and Rogers Hornsby.

Ty Cobb

On September 1, 1918 found the Georgia Peach pitching 2 innings in the second game of a doubleheader against the St. Louis Browns. George Sisler doubled off Cobb. Interestingly enough, Sisler also pitched a single scoreless inning in that game. They would repeat the matchup in the second game of another doubleheader on October 4, 1925 with Cobb hurling a scoreless inning while Sisler held the Tigers scoreless in 2 innings.

George Davis

The 1891 Cleveland Spiders featured pitcher Cy Young on their pitching staff, but somehow their star outfielder, George Davis, was called upon to pitch in three games. He compiled a lackluster record of 0 – 1 during four innings of work during which he allowed a total of eight runs on eight hits, with three walks and four strikeouts.

Buck Ewing

One of the greatest catchers from the 19th century era, Ewing made 9 appearances between 1882 and 1890, posting a 2 – 3 record during 47 innings pitched. In 1889 he became the first catcher to ever win a game as a pitcher.

Jimmie Foxx

Before he was sidelined with appendicitis in 1939, Foxx hurled a single inning of scoreless ball for the Boston Red Sox, facing 3 batters and striking out one in the 9th inning. He would return as a starter for the Philadelphia Blue Jays on August 19, 1945 at the age of 37. He tossed 7 innings in the second game of a doubleheader against the Cincinnati Reds, leaving with a 4 – 1 lead. It would be his only recorded win in 9 appearances that season.

Harry Hooper

The man who claims to have been the one to convince Boston manager Ed Barrow to move Babe Ruth to the outfield on days when he wasn't pitching so the Red Sox could take advantage of Ruth's hitting was himself on the mound for the Red Sox for two innings in a game in 1913. The rangy outfielder with the powerful and accurate arm faced seven batters during the course of two innings, giving up two hits and a walk.

George Kelly

Highpockets Kelly threw the last 5 innings of a single game for the New York Giants in 1917, facing 20 batters while giving up 4 scattered hits, walking 1 and fanning 2 batters. He was claimed on waivers by Pittsburgh shortly thereafter. Kelly returned to New York to play first base and began stroking hit after hit, compiling 10 seasons with 100 or more hits, and batting over .300 in 8 of his 16 seasons.



Stan Musial

Stan The Man made his only major league appearance on September 29, 1952 against the Chicago Cubs. He faced a single batter, Frank Baumholtz, who finished second to Musial in the 1952 batting race. Baumholtz reached base on an error. Harvey Haddix would then relieve Musial. The Cubs went on to win 3-0.

Jim O'Rourke

Orator Jim O'Rourke batted .300 or better in 13 of his 22 seasons in major league baseball. His pitching career began 12 years after his major league debut. At the age of 32 he threw 7 innings during the course of two games in 1883 where he got touched for 10 hits. The following season he appeared in 4 games, going 12 and 2/3 innings. After moving to the New York Giants in 1885, O'Rourke hung up his pitcher's spikes and returned to the outfield.

Sam Rice

He was known as one of the greatest singles hitters in baseball, stroking 2,987 hits during his 20 seasons with the Washington Senators and the Cleveland Indians, on his way to a .322 lifetime batting average. But Rice began his career as a pitcher in 1915 with the Senators, but was quickly moved to the outfield in order to take advantage of his batting prowess.

Babe Ruth

The longest and most successful pitching career of all of the Hall of Fame hitters is that of Babe Ruth. We all know that Ruth began his career as a 19-year old southpaw with the Boston Red Sox in 1914. He made his final appearance on the mound with the New York Yankees in 1933 at the age of 38. During that 10-year span Ruth pitched in 163 games, compiling a 94 – 46 record with a 2.28 ERA.

George Sisler

Like Babe Ruth, Sisler began his career as a left handed pitcher, but his hitting was too valuable to keep him on the mound. In 1912, as a freshman at the University of Michigan, Sisler struck out 20 batters during seven innings on May 12, 1912. Over seven seasons with the St. Louis Browns, Sisler made 24 appearances, compiling a record of 5 – 6 with a 2.35 ERA. He made his final pitching appearance on June 22, 1916 in a complete game loss to the Chicago White Sox.

Tris Speaker

The game between the Senators and the Red Sox on October 7, 1914, was thought to be a meaningless event at the end of the season, but actually provided three memorable moments. Rookie Babe Ruth pitches three innings in relief for Boston. The Senators' 45-year old pitcher Clark Griffith makes his final appearance on the mound. And Boston outfielder Tris Speaker makes his only pitching appearance of his career, facing four batters, giving up four hits and a single run.

Honus Wagner

Better know for stealing bases and his inside-the-park home runs, Wagner somehow found time to make two appearances on the mound, the first in 1900 and the last in 1902. In all he tossed 8-1/3 innings, giving up a total of seven hits, five runs, six walks, and three wild pitches. He also struck out six batters.

Bobby Wallace

Although he began his career as a pitcher in 1894 with the Cleveland Spiders, Wallace moved to third base in 1896 and then to shortstop in 1899 where he remained for the next 14 seasons. He returned to the mound only once thereafter, in 1902 with the St. Louis Browns at the age of 44, hurling two innings, giving up three hits and striking out one batter. Better known as a hitter with a .268 lifetime batting average, Wallace was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1953.



John M. Ward

Ward was from an era when players saw action at many positions. His career began in 1878 and lasted for 17 seasons. During that time he played shortstop (826 games), second base (491 games), pitcher (292 games), outfield (215 games), and third base (46 games). Although he threw the second perfect game in history on June 17, 1880, Ward is better known as a hitter with a .275 career batting average and for organizing the *Brotherhood of the National League*, the first player's union.

Ted Williams

On August 24, 1940, the *Splendid Splinter* hurled the final two innings of a 12 – 1 blowout at the hands of the Detroit Tigers. In all he faced nine batters, giving up three hits and only a single run when Boston third baseman Charlie Gelbert booted a double-play ball. Williams also struck out Detroit slugger Rudy York on three consecutive pitches. Williams' catcher is Joe Glenn, who caught Babe Ruth's last pitching appearance in 1933.

Player	Years	W	L	G	IP	H	R	SO	BB	BFP	ERA
Babe Ruth	10	94	46	163	1,221.3	974	398	488	441	5,006	2.28
John Ward	7	164	102	292	2,461.7	2,317	1,183	920	253	10,132	2.10
George Sisler	7	5	6	24	111.0	91	36	63	52	253	2.35
Buck Ewing	6	2	3	9	47.0	55	36	23	23	224	3.45
Bobby Wallace	5	24	22	57	402.0	469	268	120	156	NA	3.87
Jesse Burkett	3	3	1	23	123.0	144	129	84	94	NA	5.56
Roger Bresnahan	3	4	1	9	50.3	68	30	15	15	16	3.93
Sam Rice	2	1	1	9	39.3	31	18	12	19	156	2.52
Jimmie Foxx	2	1	0	10	23.7	13	4	11	14	97	1.52
Dan Brouthers	2	0	2	4	22.0	44	37	8	11	127	7.83
Jim O'Rourke	2	0	1	6	19.7	17	14	4	2	70	4.12
Honus Wagner	2	0	0	2	8.3	7	5	6	6	NA	0.00
Ty Cobb	2	0	0	3	5.0	6	2	0	2	20	3.60
Wade Boggs	2	0	0	2	2.3	3	1	2	1	11	3.86
George Kelly	1	1	0	1	5.0	4	0	2	1	20	0.00
George Davis	1	0	1	3	4.0	8	8	4	3	NA	15.75
Harry Hooper	1	0	0	1	2.0	2	0	0	1	7	0.00
Ted Williams	1	0	0	1	2.0	3	1	1	0	9	4.50
Tris Speaker	1	0	0	1	1.0	2	1	0	0	4	9.00
Stan Musial	1	0	0	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0.00

Please Note – Statistics are often incomplete for players whose careers occurred in the latter part of the 19th century and the early 20th century when certain statistics were not kept.

Copyright © 2005 by S. Derby Gisclair. All Rights Reserved.