



Home Run Milestones for Babe Ruth

by

S. Derby Gisclair

Member, Society for American Baseball Research



The home run prowess of George Herman “Babe” Ruth is legendary. So are many of the home runs that he hit – towering shots that cleared the outfield fences in ballparks across the league. And the frequency with which he produced home runs is astounding: one every 11.76 at-bats, or roughly one home run every 3.5 games.

How many times did newspapers across the country feature a headline like this?

RUTH DRIVES BALL OVER GRAND STAND

Many consider Ruth the greatest player of all-time. He is certainly the greatest home run hitter the game has ever seen, the accomplishments of others like Hank Aaron and Willie Mays notwithstanding. Debates will rage among fans and historians. Arguments involving SABRmetrics and other analytical methods will attempt to settle the matter in favor of one position or another.

The simple truth is that Babe Ruth hit home runs more frequently during his career than any other baseball player, and in so doing he changed the way the game of baseball was played. As the game teetered on the edge of collapse because of the Black Sox scandal after the 1919 World Series, it was the home run heroics of Babe Ruth that kept the fans coming to the ball park. He drew crowds wherever he played. He made the game fun again.

The following are brief excerpts about several of the home run milestones in the 22-year career of Babe Ruth.



May 6, 1915

Babe Ruth hits his first major league home run at the Polo Grounds in New York in the third inning, batting ninth in the order for the Boston Red Sox. He collected two other hits and was also the losing pitcher as the Yankees came from behind to win 4 – 3.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
1	1	New York (AL)	New York	Jack Warhop	3	0

June 25, 1918

Ruth hits four home runs in four consecutive games, matching a record first set in 1902 by Bill Bradley of the Cleveland Indians.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
15	6	Detroit (AL)	Detroit	Bill James	6	1
16	7	Cleveland (AL)	Cleveland	Johnny Enzmann	6	1
17	8	St. Louis (AL)	St. Louis	Tom Rogers	7	2
18	9	New York (AL)	New York	Allen Russell	1	1

July 8, 1918

Despite the fact that Ruth stroked the ball over the fence in Fenway to score Amos Strunk, prevailing rules reduce Ruth’s hit to a triple. This would have been his 21st career home run had it been allowed to stand.

May 20, 1919

Ruth hits the first grand slam of his career against the St. Louis Browns.

**BABE RUTH'S HOMER
WITH BASES FILLED
BEATS BROWNS, 6-4**

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
22	1	St. Louis (AL)	St. Louis	Dave Davenport	2	3

He would hit three more during the course of the 1919 season – on August 23rd against the Detroit Tigers, on September 5th against the Philadelphia A’s, and on September 27th against the Washington Senators. His feat tied a record set in 1911 by Frank Schulte of the Chicago Cubs and would eventually be broken in 1955 by another Cub, Ernie Banks.

July 5, 1919

The first game in which Ruth would hit two home runs. He would repeat the feat on July 18th against the Cleveland Indians and August 24th against the Detroit Tigers.



Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
28	8	Philadelphia (AL)	Boston	Jing Johnson	8	1
29	9	Philadelphia (AL)	Boston	Jing Johnson	10	0

July 29, 1919

Ruth ties the American League single season home run record of 16 set in 1902 by Socks Seybold.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
36	16	Detroit (AL)	Boston	Dutch Leonard	6	0

August 14, 1919

Ruth hits the first of seven home runs in 12 days, a record that would stand until 1959.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
37	18	Chicago (AL)	Chicago	Dickie Kerr	7	1

September 20, 1919

Ruth ties the single season home run record of 27 set in 1884 by Ned Williamson of the Chicago White Stockings. Four days later he will break the record hitting number 28 off Bob Shawkey of the New York Yankees.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
47	27	Chicago (AL)	Boston	Lefty Williams	9	0

September 27, 1919

**RUTH BOOSTS HOME
RUN TOTAL TO 29**

With his 29th home run of the season, Ruth becomes the first player to hit a home run in every park in the league during a single season.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
49	29	Washington (AL)	Washington	Rip Jordan	3	1

May 1, 1920

**Babe Ruth's Latest Homer
Raises His Total to Fifty**

Ruth hits his first home run as a New York Yankee, appropriately against his former teammates. The blast clears the roof at the Polo Grounds.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
50	1	Boston (AL)	New York	Herb Pennock	6	0



September 24, 1920

**Babe Ruth Clouts Two Home Runs
Against Washington**

Ruth hits his 100th career home run, the 51st of the 1920 season.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
100	51	Washington (AL)	New York	Jim Shaw	1	0

July 12, 1921

In hitting his 34th home run of the season, the 26-year old Ruth becomes the all-time home run leader in major league baseball with 137 career homers, passing the mark set by 19th century star Gavvy Cravath. He would finish the season with 59, bringing his career total to 172 home runs.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
137	34	St. Louis (AL)	St. Louis	Dixie Davis	7	0

April 18, 1923

On Opening Day in "The House That Ruth Built," the Babe hits the very first home run in Yankee Stadium.

**RUTH'S HOMER BEATS
SOX BEFORE 74,200**

**Record Crowd at Opening Game in
New Yankees' Stadium Surpasses
Old Mark by More Than 30,000**

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
198	1	Boston (AL)	New York	Howard Ehmke	3	2

May 12, 1923

Ruth hits home run number 200.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
200	3	Detroit (AL)	Detroit	Herman Pillette	6	0



August 1, 1923

After taking a called strike while batting right-handed, Ruth changes to his usual left-handed batter's box and slams the next pitch into the stands.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
222	25	Cleveland (AL)	New York	Sherry Smith	9	1

September 8, 1925

Two days after returning to the lineup after serving a nine day suspension for defying manager Miller Huggins, Ruth hits home run number 300.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
300	16	Boston (AL)	Boston	Buster Ross	7	0

September 2, 1927

Ruth hits home run number 400.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
400	44	Philadelphia (AL)	Philadelphia	Rube Walberg	1	0

September 30, 1927

Babe Ruth Sets New Home Run Record, Poling Out No. 60

Ruth blasts the 60th home run of the season off Tom Zachary. His home run production in 1927 accounted for 14% of all of the home runs in the American League that season. In today's game, a player would have to hit 340 homers in a season to account for 14% of the American League output today.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
416	60	Washington (AL)	New York	Tom Zachery	8	1

August 11, 1929

Ruth hits home run number 500.

Ruth Hits 500th Homer to Establish New Mark

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
500	30	Cleveland (AL)	Cleveland	Willis Hudlin	2	0



May 21, 1930

This is the first three home run game in Ruth's career.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
523	7	Philadelphia (AL)	Philadelphia	George Earnshaw	1	1
524	8	Philadelphia (AL)	Philadelphia	George Earnshaw	3	2
525	9	Philadelphia (AL)	Philadelphia	Lefty Grove	8	0

August 21, 1931

**RUTH HITS NO. 35
AS YANKS WIN, 11-7**

**Circuit Drive That Helps Set
Back Browns Is 600th of
Major League Career.**

Ruth hits home run number 600. Lou Gehrig immediately follows Ruth's historic shot with a home run of his own. In the 10 years they play together, Ruth and Gehrig will homer in the same inning 19 times and in the same game 72 times.

Young Tony Gallico snared the historic ball on the street outside the stadium after it bounced off of a parked car. He returned it to Ruth in exchange for an autographed ball and a \$10 bill.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
600	35	St. Louis (AL)	St. Louis	George Blaeholder	3	1

July 6, 1933

Babe Ruth hits the first home run in All-Star history at Comiskey Park, Chicago.

July 13, 1934

**RUTH HITS 700TH
AS YANKS SCORE, 4-2**

A now 39-year old Ruth hits career home run number 700.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
700	14	Detroit (AL)	Detroit	Tommy Bridges	3	1

September 29, 1934

Babe Ruth hits his last home run as a New York Yankee.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
708	22	Washington (AL)	Washington	Syd Cohen	7	2



May 25, 1935

Ruth Hits 3 Homers but Braves Lose, 11-7; Gets an Ovation From Fans in Pittsburgh

Now playing for the Boston Braves, Ruth has one final moment in the sun, a three home run game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. These are the last home runs of his career.

Career	Season	Opponent	Site	Pitcher	Inning	On-Base
712	4	Pittsburgh (NL)	Pittsburgh	Red Lucas	1	1
713	5	Pittsburgh (NL)	Pittsburgh	Guy Bush	3	1
714	6	Pittsburgh (NL)	Pittsburgh	Guy Bush	7	0

Ruth's final home run is the first to clear the right field grandstand at Forbes Field.

Babe Ruth made his final major league appearance on May 30, 1935 and announced his retirement two days later at the age of 40.

