

BASEBALL HISTORY

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2000's Leaders – Wins and Triples

As the first decade of the 21st century draws to a close, I thought it might be interesting to look at a couple of major league baseball's decade leader categories.

While researching total wins, I was surprised to find a torrid battle going on for first place. Here are the top twenty winners of the 2000's as of June 14, 2009. An asterisk (*) by a name means that player is either retired or has not appeared in a major league game in 2009.

Player	Total Wins
Randy Johnson	141
Andy Pettitte	140
Tim Hudson *	135
Mike Mussina *	134
Greg Maddux *	134
Jamie Moyer	132
Roy Halladay	132
Roy Oswalt	132
Mark Buehrle	128
Barry Zito	126

Player	Total Wins
Livan Hernandez	125
CC Sabathia	122
Derek Lowe	122
Tom Glavine *	118
Curt Schilling *	117
Bartolo Colon	117
Javier Vazquez	117
Johan Santana	117
Jeff Suppan	113
Jon Garland	110

It seems like it would be a fight to the finish between two old warhorses – Johnson and Pettitte. But if either or both falter, Oswalt could be waiting in the wings. Halladay also should be considered, but with his recent trip to the Disabled List (June 17th), he may not have enough opportunities to catch up.

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No matter who is left standing at the conclusion of the 2009 season, this decade will claim the lowest win total ever. Johnson would have to win 27 games and Pettitte 28 to tie Jack Morris, who led the pack in the 1980's with 162 wins. They both have six victories in 2009 as of this writing and it's not likely that either of them could match the necessary win totals.

The last 27 game winner was Bob Welch in 1990.

For most of the last quarter of the 20th century as ballparks became smaller and smaller and players became bigger and stronger (honestly or not), the triple was seen less frequently. However, in the decade of the 2000's, the triple has experienced a resurgence due to the rare skills of the decade leaders listed below. These totals are through June 14, 2009.

Player	Triples
Jimmy Rollins	91
Carl Crawford	87
Cristian Guzman	78
Juan Pierre	74
Jose Reyes	73
Ichiro Suzuki	66
Johnny Damon	57
Kenny Lofton *	56
Carlos Beltran	54
Rafael Furcal	53

Player	Triples
Dave Roberts *	53
Curtis Granderson	51
Luis Castillo	49
Chone Figgins	49
Brian Giles	48
Ray Durham *	47
Orlando Hudson	46
Carlos Guillen	45
Randy Winn	42
Michael Young	41

Rollins (30), Crawford (27), Reyes (26), and Granderson (28) are the youngest players of the above group. There are five more who are only 31 years old.

Since the 1950's only two players – Willie Wilson in the 1980's and Lance Johnson in the 1990's – have banged out more than 100 triples in a particular decade. Wilson finished with 115 and Johnson 113. Vada Pinson (93 in the 1960's) is next in line for Rollins.

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Roberto Clemente (166) is the career triples leader for players who began their major league careers after 1950. The top ten is rounded out by Wilson (147), Lou Brock (141), Willie Mays (140), Willie Davis (138), George Brett (137), Pete Rose (135), Brett Butler (131), Vada Pinson (127), and Robin Yount (126). It seems as though a few of the active leaders – Rollins, Crawford, and Reyes in particular -- have a good chance to break into the post-1950's group. At the close of the 2008 season and at the same respective ages, all three are ahead of Clemente's pace: Rollins 90/82, Crawford 84/58, and Reyes 71/48.

All of the active leaders as well as the top ten since 1950 have been predominantly middle infielders or outfielders, except for George Brett. Rose played 56% of his games as a middle infielder or outfielder.

Steve Finley, who retired after the 2007 season, ranked a distant 2nd to Johnson in the 1990's with 83 triples. He's also 11th on the after 1950's list (124). This makes him the highest ranked (T90th on the career list) of the more recent players.

Johnny Damon is the leader of the active career list with 94.

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