

APBA ISSUES 1941 BASEBALL SEASON

Owen Drops 3rd Strike — Yanks Whip Dodgers in Series!

The 1941 season is known primarily for two of modern baseball's most memorable achievements and one of its most notable failures.

Many observers still point to Joe DiMaggio's incredible 1941 hitting streak as the baseball record least likely to be broken. From May 15 through July 16, a period of more than two months, the Yankee Clipper hit safely at least once in every single game he played. During the 56-game skein he pounded the ball at a .408 clip. After being stopped in Game #57 by three great defensive plays (two by Ken Keltner and one by Lou Boudreau) in Cleveland, he promptly ran off another streak, this one lasting 16 games. In reality, the unbelievable streak of 56 was very nearly an even more astonishing 73 games!

In 1941 young Ted Williams became the first major leaguer in 11 years to hit .400. No one, of course, has done it since. And the Splendid Splinter did it in style. A shade under .400 at .3995 going into the final day of the season, Williams rapped out six hits in eight at bats in a double-header against Philadelphia. Ted had 37 homers and 120 RBI to go with his final .406 figure.

The 1941 World Series matched the underdog Dodgers against the powerhouse Yanks, and it wasn't expected to be much of a Series. But the Brooks found themselves just one out away from evening the Series at two games apiece in the top of the ninth inning of Game 4. Brooklyn led, 4-3, with two out and nobody on base, and Hugh Casey facing Tommy Henrich. Casey fanned him on a 3-2 pitch for an apparent Dodger victory, but the third strike escaped catcher Mickey Owen and Henrich was safe at first. The Bronx Bombers then exploded for four runs to win, 7-4, and they finished off the demoralized Dodgers in the fifth game the following day.

BUMS OUTLAST CARDS FOR NL PENNANT

Batting champ Pete Reiser (.343), MVP Dolph Camilli (34 HR, 120 RBI), Joe Medwick (.318) and Dixie Walker (.311) paced a potent offense and led the Dodgers to their surprise pennant. Kirby Higbe and Whitlow Wyatt each won 22 games, and Billy Herman and Pee Wee Reese formed a fine DP combination.

Second-place St. Louis was short on power, but had .300-plus hitters in Johnny Mize, Enos Slaughter, Jimmy Brown and Johnny Hopp. Workhorses Ernie White and Lon Warneke won 17 games apiece.

Defending champion Cincinnati slumped to third in spite of an outstanding starting rotation of Elmer Riddle (19-4), Bucky Walters (19-15), Johnny Vander Meer and Paul Derringer. A season-long team hitting slump was the reason: even proven hitters like Ernie Lombardi and Frank McCormick were unable to pick up the slack.

The arm of Max Butcher (17-12) and the bats of Arky Vaughan (.316) and Vince DiMaggio (21 HR, 100 RBI) kept the Pirates in the first division. (All 3 DiMaggio brothers were regular major league centerfielders in 1941.)

Veteran Dick Bartell hit .303 for New York, but Mel Ott (27 HR, 90 RBI) and Babe Young (25 HR, 104 RBI) provided most of the Giant offense. Aging Carl Hubbell and Hal Schumacher could still be tough on the hitters.

Stan Hack (.317) and Bill Nicholson (26 HR, 98 RBI) weren't enough to bring the Cubs in higher than sixth. But Claude Passeau and Vern Olsen were consistent starters for Chicago all year.

Boston's top hitter was Johnny Cooney (.319), but Max West and part-timer Paul Waner could be dangerous on occasion. Jim Tobin's 12-12 record was the best the Braves' pitchers could manage.

The notorious "Boom-Boom" Beck's 1-9 record was fairly typical of the Phils' horrible staff. Nick Etten and Danny Litwhiler were solid .300 hitters for Philadelphia and Danny Murtaugh led the league in steals, but they weren't nearly enough to counter the effect of the pitching.

YANKS WITHOUT PEER IN AL

So superior were the Yankees that only one other AL team was able to play better than .500 ball. MVP DiMaggio (.357, 30 HR, 125 RBI) was the champs' driving force, but Charlie Keller (33 HR, 122 RBI), Henrich (31 HR) and Joe Gordon (24 HR) supplied plenty of additional power. Phil Rizzuto (.307) added speed and Bill Dickey experience. Lefty Gomez, Red Ruffing and Marius Russo headed up the pitching staff.

Had Boston's pitching measured up to its hitting, the Bosox might have challenged the Yankees. But Dick Newsome (19-10) was the only big winner on a staff supported by offensive stars like Williams, Jimmie Foxx (.300, 19 HR, 105 RBI), Joe Cronin (.311), Bobby Doerr and Dom DiMaggio. Even the immortal Lefty Grove was too old to be of much help on the mound.

The White Sox, with 22-game winner Thornton Lee, finished third. But Chicago had only two really tough outs in its lineup—Taft Wright (.322) and Luke Appling (.314).

Jeff Heath had a great year for Cleveland, hitting .340 with 24 HR (76 extra base hits in all) and 123 RBI. However, with Boudreau having an off-year, Keltner was the only other legitimate power threat in the lineup with 23 HR. Bob Feller won 25 games, but the rest of the pitching staff was far below contending caliber.

For the Tigers, the frustration of the season was reflected in the record of Bobo Newsom, who lost 20 in 1941 after winning 21 for the 1940 pennant-winners. Rudy York (27 HR, 111 RBI), Barney McCosky (.324) and Rip Radcliff (.317) had fine seasons, but Hall-of-Famer Charlie Gehringer was reaching the end of the line.

Roy Cullenbine hit .317 for St. Louis and George McQuinn anchored a respectable infield including Harland Clift and Johnny Berardino, but the Brownies suffered from the lack of a genuine stopper on the mound.

The Senators had two reliable pitchers, Dutch Leonard (18-13) and Sid Hudson, and a couple of good hitters in Cecil Travis (.359) and Mickey Vernon. They also boasted the majors' top base stealer in George Case.

Philadelphia had a handful of good hitters—Sam Chapman (.322, 25 HR, 106 RBI), Bob Johnson (22 HR, 107 RBI), Dick Siebert (.334) and Wally Moses (.301)—but like the Phillies, co-tenants at Shibe Park, their pitching was awful.

1941 SEASON CARD SET — \$10.00

The 1941 baseball season card set can be ordered now. Its price is \$10.00 [\$10.60 in Penna., \$11.00 to all foreign purchasers]. The set contains 320 player cards—20 for each of the 16 major league teams in existence in 1941. A lineup sheet is also included, free of charge, with each 1941 card set. As with the 1976 season cards, delivery is guaranteed by April 30 for January orders.

Please note that this is a card set ONLY, NOT a complete game. No XB's are available for it. Like the 1949 and 1930 season sets, the 1941 cards will not be reprinted when supplies are exhausted, so buy now!

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