

Introduction

In the 15 years since the inaugural edition of *Total Baseball*, the world has undergone an information explosion. For baseball fans the result has been not only more coverage, but a deluge of detailed information delivered through cable television, all-talk radio, wireless communication, newspapers, books, magazines and, of course, the Internet. The challenge for new editions of *Total Baseball* has been to continue to provide an experience that is deep and wide, and beyond that offered anywhere else.

Total Baseball has always been a dynamic product, with each new edition building on the previous volumes by adding new features, revising and expanding existing ones, and sometimes retiring old favorites to make way for new ones. This eighth edition is no different.

To our Player and Pitcher Registers we have added Win Shares, the revolutionary statistic developed by baseball's sabermetric genius Bill James, plus many other stats not seen in previous editions. New essays examine Barry Bonds and the "Moneyball" phenomenon, as well as assess the greatest teams and the most influential people in baseball history. We take a look at the startling discovery early this year that a former slave, William Edward White, was the first African-American to play in the major leagues, suiting up for Providence in 1879. In addition, long-time readers will be delighted that we have revived and updated several memorable essays from past editions, including: "The True Father of Baseball," "The First Great Pitcher," "The Business of Baseball," "Jackie Robinson's Signing," "Baseball and the Law," and a dramatically enhanced "Ballparks Past and Present."

What has always separated *Total Baseball* from other baseball encyclopedias is that we have endeavored to tell the history of America's pastime in stories as well as statistics. For this eighth edition, we have taken an additional giant step forward and included more than 200 classic photographs, including the *Total Baseball* Gallery, a 24-page color insert that pays tribute to the game's glorious past. Although assembled from several sources, the bulk of the photos came from the outstanding archives of the old *SPORT* magazine and the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

And speaking of *SPORT*, another exciting addition to this edition is the inclusion of 18 essays by some of America's most noted baseball writers that appeared in *SPORT* magazine during the 1940s, '50s and '60s. In addition to seven essays that examine some of the great teams in baseball history, the *SPORT* contribution

includes profiles of eight Hall of Fame players from the first half of the 20th century, a piece on Chicago's famous early-century infield of Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers and Frank Chance, as well as a look at Curt Flood and Hank Aaron in the tumultuous 1970s. These 18 time capsules from *SPORT* transport the reader to earlier times with a sense of immediacy that even the best historical retrospective can't equal.

The final new element is year-by-year reviews of every season in major-league history, from 1871 through 2003. This was a mammoth undertaking that amounted to producing enough copy to fill an entire book unto itself, plus statistical overviews that comprise standings, award winners, postseason and All Star Game results, and league batting and pitching leaders across several categories.

When it first appeared, in 1989, *Total Baseball* was the most complete, most authoritative, and most informative—not to mention the biggest—baseball book ever published. It came into being because its creators saw there was nothing else like it and because its publishers had faith that fans would want such a book—a virtual baseball library in one volume. Today, despite the advent of so many alternate sources of information, that faith remains unshaken.

As usual, the book is divided into two parts. The first consists of prose features on subjects of interest to all baseball fans that were written by experts in their fields, as befits an encyclopedic reference work. The same holds true for the second part, which contains the playing and pitching registers, a year-by-year statistical summary of major league play since 1871, season and career statistical leaders, and more. The cornucopia of stats old and new of baseball's 16,003 players—for everyone from all-time leaders to cup-of-coffee nonentities—will provide days, months, and years of archaeological delight for baseball fans of all stripes.

Benefiting from the painstaking research of hundreds of friends and colleagues in the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), we have corrected many errors and omissions in the historical record, relying not upon the numbers enshrined by tradition or official edict but upon the evidence. This book is as good as we know how to make it, but we do want to hear from you about our blunders (we know there will be some) or about your research (which may be important to subsequent editions of *Total Baseball*). We believe that history is process, not product, and our aim continues to be to attract the top minds in baseball to ensure that each new edition will be even better than the last.