

Out of Bounds

JASON SNYDER

Yankees considered one of baseball's best teams

Are the 1998 New York Yankees the greatest baseball team to ever take the diamond? That seems to be the golden question in the world of sports today. So being as inquisitive about the history of sports as I am, I decided to begin my expedition into the past to see how this Yankees' team compares to Major League Baseball's top contenders.

My journey into the past began when my parents asked me the question, "who do you think is the greatest team ever?" Fueled by the fact that I had no idea what other teams qualified for such recognition, I realized that in order to answer such a question I needed to evaluate these teams position by position, player by player, manager by manager, competition by competition. Every aspect of the game needed to be examined. After all, I never saw the legendary Babe Ruth and his 1927 New York Yankees or Joe Morgan and his 1975 Cincinnati Reds. So how could I give a fair answer without looking at the circumstances these different teams faced?

This 1998 New York Yankees team without a doubt finished one of the greatest seasons ever witnessed. By sweeping the San Diego Padres, the Yanks have the right to be considered one of the top teams MLB has ever seen. The question is, are they the "greatest?"

In order to answer that question, I had to ask, "what does it mean to truly be the greatest team ever? What qualities must a team possess to be regarded with such admiration and respect? How do you compare teams that played under totally different circumstances in totally different times and places with totally different mindsets?"

The only way to truly find the best baseball team ever would be to put all the great teams on some "field of dreams" and let them answer the question that no one can seem to answer with certainty. But the fact that such a moment couldn't exist makes this "great debate" even more mysterious.

What a moment it would be to see the great 1927 Yankees' Babe Ruth in the batter's box in the World Series of all World Series facing 98 Yankees' closer Mariano Rivera. Or the 1975 Cincinnati Reds' Joe Morgan having a slugfest with the 1939 Yankees' Joe DiMaggio. Who would win the pitcher's duel between the 1910 Philadelphia Athletics' Jack Coombs and the 1906 Chicago Cubs' Three Finger Brown?

As fans, we can only speculate what would happen between these six teams. Of the thousands of different teams that have taken the field, these six teams stuck out as having the best seasons MLB has ever witnessed. The 1906 Chicago

Cubs, 1910 Philadelphia Athletics, 1927 New York Yankees, 1939 New York Yankees, 1975 Cincinnati Reds, and the 1998 New York Yankees all have the right to be considered the greatest teams in history.

The 1906 Chicago Cubs were one of the winningest teams ever. They went 116-36 in the regular season featuring Hall of Famers such as shortstop Joe Tinker, 2B Johnny Evers, 1B Frank Chance, and pitcher Three Finger Brown.



Their overall record of 118-40 equals a .747 winning percentage, which still stands as the highest in MLB history. However, the Cubs' 4-2 World Series loss to the Chicago White Sox could be the final factor in this dispute. How can they be considered the greatest ever, if they couldn't win when the time was right?

The 1910 Philadelphia Athletics brought about the first debate of who the greatest team ever really was. The 1906 Cubs had a challenge in the form of the 102-48 Athletics. Hall of Famers Eddie Collins, 3B Home Run Baker, pitchers Eddie Plank and Chief Bender heated up the debate the best way they could...by beating the Cubs four games to one in the 1910 World Series. A's pitcher Jack Coombs finished the season with 31 wins.

The 1927 New York Yankees are probably the most storied team in the history of baseball. "Murderer's Row," they were called. It wasn't just their 114-44 record that gives them a spot in this debate, but the names and way in which they did it. As if Hall of Fame pitchers Waite Hoyt and Herb Pennock, 2B Tony Lazzeri, and CF Earle Combs weren't enough, the '27 Yanks' had two of the biggest names in baseball history on their roster. Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth led this team of superstars to a 4-0 sweep of the Pittsburgh Pirates in the World Series.

The 1939 New York Yankees included the next generation of Yankee greats. But this team was special in more than their 106-45 record. The '39 Yanks battled through as much adversity as any team can handle. Not only were they going for their fourth straight World Series championship, which involves enough pressure, but they were forced to do it without the ill Lou Gehrig. League MVP Joe DiMaggio only played in 120 of the games and the team had just lost Hall of Famer Tony Lazzeri. The Yankees still went on to win the World Series by sweeping Cincinnati 4-0 behind the pitching of seven pitchers with 10 or more wins.

The 1975 Cincinnati Reds finished their

season with a 108-54 record. Joe Morgan, arguably the best baseball player in the country at the time, led the Reds to a World Series championship by beating the Boston Red Sox four games to three. One of the greatest catchers of all time, Johnny Bench, also contributed as the controversial Pete Rose added to the explosive offense.

This brings us to the 1998 New York Yankees. These Yankees finished the regular season with 114 wins, the most ever for an American League team. Their success continued through the playoffs and the World Series, going 11-2 in the postseason. But putting their record aside, the '98 Yankees can take credit for having the most balanced line-up in baseball history. The thing that made this New York team so good was that there wasn't a weakness in their batting order or pitching rotation.

Tino Martinez and Paul O'Neill both hit more than 100 RBI's for the year, and ten other players hit at least ten homers. Bernie Williams had the highest batting average in the AL with .339 as Derek Jeter, Paul O'Neill and Scott Brosius also hit above .300 for the year.

The Yankees backed up their great offense with great pitching. David Wells, David Cone, Andy Pettitte, "El Duque" Hernandez, and Hideki Irabu combined for a 79-35 record, with all five winning at least ten games. Closer Mariano Rivera recorded 36 saves on the year.

Certainly, the 1998 Yankees can hold their own in this "Great Debate of '98." Their 125 total wins is a mark that had never been reached. Granted, they played in an expansion year that saw two other teams reach the century mark for wins, but that is a fact that is beyond their control. The Yankees proved their point by sweeping the Padres, the team that beat both of those 100 win teams in the National League playoffs.

Just as we look back and marvel at baseball's great teams, so will sports fans decades from now. The only difference will be that, when they look back in the past and search for the greatest teams that ever took the diamond, the 1998 New York Yankees will have to be among their elite groups. Like them or not, this Yankees' team was special and they didn't disappoint any baseball fan that was hoping for a miracle finish to this magical season. This Yankee team performed plenty of magic from David Wells' perfect game to Scott Brosius' unlikely heroics in the World Series. The Yanks were great from the top of the order to the bottom, an accomplishment that most teams can only dream of.

Snyder is the sports editor of The Beacon. His column appears weekly.

INTRAMURAL ROUNDUP

Intramurals

Flag Football

M, W, COED
- Games began October 14

Billiards

M, W, COED
- Singles and Doubles play
- Schedules will be posted Sunday November 1
- Play begins Monday November 2

Registration Deadline:
October 30

Bowling

M, W, COED
- Individual and team competition
- At Eastway Lanes
- Saturday November 7

Registration Deadline:
October 30

Recreation

Commuter Euchre Tournament

Registration Deadline: November 6

Volleyball team struggles through challenging week

By Jamie Salapek
staff writer

The Behrend volleyball team has begun to wind down their 1998 volleyball season with another busy week. The women struggled through the Juniata Tournament last weekend, losing 3 matches, but came back to sweep a match last Monday against Pitt-Greensburg.

On October 23-24, Behrend ventured down to the Juniata Tournament. Their first opponent was Division II ranked Clarion. Behrend's Division III team won the first game 16-14 yet fell in the last three games. The Lions played well against Clarion but couldn't convert the crucial points of the match.

Behrend's second match of the tournament was against Muskingum Uni-

versity. The match was very quick paced. The Lions' setting was exceptional, but not enough to get the win as Muskingum won three matches to none.

The final match of the tournament was in the silver medal round against St. John Fisher. Behrend was not able to recover from its previous two losses. Their setting was still consistent but the Lions were unable to produce a win and lost in three straight games.

The Lions challenged Pitt-Greensburg on their home court on October 26. Greensburg had some intimidating players, including one measuring 6'4".

Behrend came in with their guard up and played a smart match. In the first game, the Lions continued their impressive setting and added strong

serving to their game. In games two and three, the Lions again took control of the court. The women worked well to produce good sets and hard hits. Behrend played strong defense, digging many of Pitt-Greensburg's hits. The Lions headed to the locker room with a three game sweep of their AMCC opponents.

Tiffany Beers led the team with seven kills. Tanya Deats and Heather Lerch each added six kills. Sarah Fry provided 26 assists, and Mary Good delivered seven digs. Behrend had many standouts that worked together to come away with the victory.

The Lions will now finish their season on the road. They will face LaRoche on Halloween and then finish the season facing off with Lake Erie College.



photo by Jason Blake

Mary Good spikes the ball during a home game last week

The Behrend Classifieds

Sisters of AST
Thanks so much for all your support last week. We did a great job. Congrats on winning Greek Week.

Love, Misty

Maddoy
Thanks for believing in me. You are the BEST.
Moo

Thank you to all the students who took time to come out and take part in Homecoming activities
Misty

Jules, Tom & Pat
Thanks for always being there. Your support and your brothers' support meant the world to me.
Misty

To my boys in 3.1
What's the dilly?
Willy J

B-Bud
You are one heck of a campaign manager. Thanks for everything you've done, not only last week, but all semester. I really don't know where I would be without you.
Love, Lemon Fish

Arlowe
I'll break your kneecaps if you don't pay me.
Jon

Students and employees of Penn State Behrend are invited to submit a free classified ad in *The Beacon*. Types of ads may include personal messages and items for sale. Maximum classified length is 25 words. Persons who submit ads must state their affiliation with Behrend. Classifieds are meant for individual use. Official notices and group events should be submitted to the Calendar editor. Businesses must pay regular advertising rates. *The Beacon* can not guarantee the publication of all classified submitted for space purposes. Classifieds should be sent to the Classified editor at *The Beacon*, Reed Building or dropped off at *The Beacon* offices, or sent to behrcoll4@aol.com. Deadline for submission for publication in that week's paper is Monday at 5:00PM.