

FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH TO THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

While we continue treasure hunting in the BarryCode, like Midas we may occasionally take a new look at the old gold. As the final hour of this most crucial off-season further passed our pastime past time, I deliberately uncovered the Codell present in the form of a neatly divided and challenging chart.

Since the onset of “two league play” in 1901, the first 100 years recounted in Barry Codell’s *Batting Encyclopedia* provide a perfectly striking and surprising statistical fissure of major league player prowess.

Dividing the 100 years from 1901 through 2000 into 2 50-year spans through accompanying lists of Batting Base-Out Differentials brings us 2 truths, one obvious and one unsuspected.

The first epoch, of course, is dominated by Babe Ruth. Those innumerable, extolling pages from the Book of Ruth are enhanced by the BOD; this telling stat is best mathematically described here by the differential between the top two differentials. Ruth’s total exceeds his runner up teammate Lou Gehrig’s by over 900!

Our most recent semi-centennial, though, proclaims and celebrates a new gospel of the redoubtable (and second) Frank Thomas, who amassed its highest cumulative BOD, surpassing both Ted Williams and Mickey Mantle, with his all-encompassing Base-Out Differential figure.

The Big Hurt’s status as a viable contender for the “Best Hitter of the ‘90s” title now rightly pales beside this new-found stat. Codell, long known as Big Frank’s statistical biographer (“Thomas’s Boswell”) clearly demonstrates here the uniquely effective effect he had had on the games played, as well as the game’s history.

As can be seen in the following graphic, two players (Ted Williams and Stan Musial) profoundly influenced each half century. Interestingly, two others (George Selkirk and Tim Salmon) perhaps can finally emerge with their “props.” Each of these rare, positive Batting Base-Out Differentials here disclosed can only further widen our widened baseball eyes as we peruse this loftiest of lists--and pursue the next one, to appear on the BarryCode in April 2051. See you there!

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