



FROM THE BENCH/Jack Kavanagh

A letter from Steve Sandhop, Baytown, Texas was all we needed to put a rainy afternoon into research after the fact regarding the put out assignments on the new (Fifth Edition) Second Roll Chart.

Steve wondered about the reality of assessing one sixth of all put outs to infield pop ups or line drives. Also he wondered about the comparison of outfield fly outs to infield ground outs.

We have always used a guide line, "all things relatively equal or not vital, use that which is easiest to memorize." That's why we split the Second Roll Chart into three nicely rounded off groups.

We also put the variables where they seemed to make the most sense. Base hits most often land somewhere in the outfield when they are not caught. So, we related outfield fly outs to the low number end of the chart where base hits are determined.

At the high end we located the ground outs with the stipulation they could be converted into strike outs. Much of the content of "EI" draws upon my impressions stored up from playing and watching thousands of ball games. It is my belief that strike outs reduce ground balls more than they do fly balls. I'll leave it for someone else to chart Ryan, Tanana, Seaver and other strike out pitchers but will assume until proven wrong fewer ground balls are hit off their speed than is the common result.

This provides a kind of "bonus" to pitchers who obtain a higher number of outs via strike outs. Runners don't advance on strike outs. They do on ground balls hit behind them, some grounders not handled cleanly enough to force the runner but soon enough to retire the batter and

the runner who moves up on the hit and run which produces an infield ground out.

After reading Steve's letter I figured it was time to prove what my instincts had determined and which my wish to put things into easily memorized form had provided. I used the 1974 American League stats for no other reason than the baseball guide for that year was closest at hand. There was a league batting average of .258, close enough to divide the one half of all combinations (1-1-1 through 3-6-6) into nearly equal parts.

The Official League stats produced 13,566 put outs by outfielders with a league total at all positions of 52,346 a comforting .2591 and as close as one could hope to come on a permanent basis when one is relating total put outs to individual teams, leagues, etc. drawn from any possible time in baseball's past.

To determine the relationship between infield put outs via line drive or pop up (in other words, "unassisted") and the automatic assignment to one sixth of all combinations (4-1-1 thru 4-6-6) needed some arduous stepping through data. We tabbed all outfield assists (445); catcher's put outs (remember, a strike out is recorded as a put out by the catcher) and assists (10,385 and 1,043); pitcher's put outs and assists (965 and 2574) which gave us totals of 24,916 put outs and 4,062 assists for all positions except infielders. By subtracting those totals from the league totals we established 27,430 infield put outs and 17,431 infield assists. And that's 9,999 (shall we round it off at 10,000?) unassisted put outs. And that's .1910 of the league's put outs with .1667 of the chart having been given to this form of out.

However, while there can only be one put out per assist, there can be more than one assist per put out. A ball deflected by the pitcher to the short stop who throws the batter out at first produced two assists to the put out.

We also realize that while the range 4-1-1 to 4-6-6 (.1667) is referred to as "Infield Fly Out" we've included outs to the catcher or pitcher in the combinations on the chart. There are 24 possibilities and, without allowing for the imbalance for there being more right handed batters than left handed, four of these involve non-infield positions. So, the actual possibilities of there being an unassisted put out by a first, second or third baseman, or short stop, are .1481, not .1667. We'll still consider it close enough to leave the more easily memorized form untouched.

(Ed.) Chuck Shipan, Chicago, Illinois, has sent us the results of an EI tournament that he held recently. The first round was a best-of-three series, and the second and third rounds were five game series, and the final round was a seven game series. Highlights included an 18 inning game between the 1957 Braves and the 1927 Yanks, won by the Yanks 11 - 9; a 3 - 1 game won by the 1919 White Sox over the 1927 Yanks in which Cicotte threw a two hitter, facing 29 batters, while the Yank's only run was a Lazzari sacrifice for Gehrig; the 1906 Cubs over the 1929 Cubs by 1 to 0 in which Root and Brown threw 5-hitters, both walking one and striking out 6, with Root losing on a triple to Sheckard and a double to Chance. Babe Ruth was the MVP. In 16 games for the 1927 Yankees he batted 70 times with an amazing total of 12 homers, 35 RBIs, and a BA of .431!

