

Who wins in April?

By John Grabowski

Which major-league baseball team has the best record in the 1980s?

It's the New York Yankees. In the 1980 to '88 span, George Steinbrenner's minions won 780 games and lost only 621 for a winning percentage of .557. Right behind the Bronx Bombers were Sparky Anderson's Detroit Tigers, with 780 wins and 624 losses for a .556 percentage.

In the National League, the Los Angeles Dodgers compiled the best 1980 to '88 mark overall. Tommy Lasorda's boys in blue have won at a .532 clip, with 748 victories and 658 defeats. The St. Louis Cardinals were second in the National League with a mark of 739-658 (.529).

But let's examine the April records for the past nine seasons.

Which teams have gotten off to the fastest starts? Which have been the slowest out of the gate?

The major-league leader in fast starts during the 1980s turns out to be Los Angeles. As good as the Dodgers have been overall, they have been even better in the opening month of the season. During the 1980 to '88 span, LA won 114 games in April while losing only 78 — for a .594 winning percentage, 62 points above their overall cumulative mark.

The New York Mets broke out fastest in the NL East, with 89 wins in April and 73 losses, good for a .549 mark, or 27 points above their overall average. Other NL teams who played well in the first month of the season: Pittsburgh (16 points higher), Cincinnati (12 points), Montreal (9 points) and Atlanta (4 points).

Two Western Division clubs topped the American League standings in the 1980s for being hotter in April than during the rest of the season. Going into this season, Oakland had won 111 and lost 84 for a .569 percentage. In April, the California Angels posted a 110-86 log (.561). Each total was 68 points better than the overall regular-season mark compiled by the team for the nine-year period, the biggest positive difference in the majors.

The Tigers have produced the AL East's best 1980 to '88 April mark (.577, .557). But the team that has shown the division's biggest tendency to play better in April than during the rest of the season is, surprisingly, the Cleveland Indians. Compiling only a .456 percentage overall in the '80s, the

Tribe won at a .491 rate in the first month of the season, a difference of 35 points. Other AL teams with better percentages in April than later in the year: Milwaukee (17 points), Chicago (2 points) and Detroit (1 point).

The teams that have been the poorest starters this decade are the Baltimore Orioles and Seattle Mariners.

Paced by their 1-22 start of 1988, the Orioles have compiled a 73-104 record in April during the '80s, for a .412 percentage — 98 points below their overall cumulative mark (.510).

The Mariners' 1980 to '88 record of 85-114 in April amounts to a .427 percentage. Seattle, however, has at least been consistent. Its overall mark for the nine seasons is 600-804, for an identical .427 percentage.

In the National League, the Cubs' .441 percentage in April is the lowest in the 1980s, as is their .461 overall mark. The Philadelphia Phillies' .461 in April is 50 points below their overall percentage, for the largest such difference in the NL.

The New York Mets have had winning marks in each of the past five Aprils, the longest such streak in the majors. Over that time, they have won 63 and lost 32 for a .663 average.

The Los Angeles Dodgers have posted winning records in seven of the nine Aprils, the most of any team.

On the other hand, the Atlanta Braves and Texas Rangers will be looking to break streaks of five consecutive losing Aprils.

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Bridge winners

Jake Timpson and George Farrow took top honors in duplicate bridge play at the Georgetown Legion on Apr. 17.

Jack Kaarsemaker and Harry Arbic teamed up for second spot and Lorena Norris and Earl Ryder earned third.

Anglers snag new Ontario records

New Ontario records have been set for four species of game fish, officials of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' Ontario Record Fish Registry announced recently.

Prior to 1988, Ontario had no official recognition program to confirm and acknowledge catches of fish of exceptional size. Now, thanks to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the sponsorship of the "Molson Export" Big Fish Contest, things have changed.

In its first year of operation, the Ontario Record Fish Registry has authenticated record status for muskellunge, silver redhorse, bluegill and black crappie. A total of 47 species are eligible for record fish status under the program.

Ken O'Brien, a 28-year-old novice angler from Toronto, did

what many hard core muskellunge enthusiasts have been trying to do for years — land a new Canadian and Ontario record. His 65-pound muskie bettered the existing Ontario record by more than three pounds. Caught in Blackstone Harbour (Archipelago Township) on a 4-inch Rapala Countdown last October, the muskellunge measured 58 inches in length and 30.5 inches in girth.

The North River in Tay Township (southeast of Midland) was the scene of Bruce Johnstone's record setting catch. The 22-year-old angler from Midland reeled in a silver redhorse that weighed an incredible 8.81 pounds and measured 27 inches from nose to tail. Never an abundant fish, "Freshwater Fishes of Canada" lists a 25-inch, 8.50-pound silver redhorse as the previously confirmed maximum size for the species. Clearly, Johnstone's fish, caught on a white plastic grub in May, is remarkable.

Dan Hostetter of Cincinnati, Ohio, was fishing with a worm on Rice Lake (south of Peterborough) last July when a 14.10-ounce (.88-pound) bluegill took the bait. This deep-bodied member of the sunfish family is characteristically found in shallow, weedy lakes. Available data indicate Hostetter's 9.76-inch bluegill could be well over 10 years old.

Charles Sherrill of Detroit, Michigan, established a record for the black crappie in 1986 with the catch of a 3.78-pound specimen from Hillman Marsh, east of Leamington. (Under the provision of Rule 9, anglers who supply pro-

per documentation may have a fish caught prior to the start of the Registry in 1988 acknowledged as a record). Sherrill's amazing crappie, caught on a minnow, was 17 inches in length. The previously recorded maximum length for an Ontario black crappie was 12-14 inches.

Anglers who believe their 1989 catch is larger than the entry requirement or larger than the current record for the species (shown on the Ontario Record Fish Registry brochure), should have their fish weighed on a government inspected scale and carefully measured for total length and girth in the presence of a witness. A letter from an M.N.R. District Manager, verifying the fish's species, weight, length and girth is required. The angler must then photograph the fish and complete the O.F.A.H. Ontario Record Fish Registry entry form. Anglers are asked to keep their fish frozen and in their possession until requested by Record Fish Registry officials.

For each fish judged to be a new Ontario record, the angler will receive a handsome commemorative certificate. A replica of the fish will be made by award-winning taxidermist Ron Reynolds of Bath, Ontario. Reynolds' replicas are considered superior in quality and detail to traditional skin mounts.

Complete details on the O.F.A.H. Ontario Record Fish Registry are available on the entry brochures available from licence issuers; from Molson representatives; at all Chrysler, Stryker, Evinrude, and Direct Film outlets.

Link up with lessons

Adults are no longer alone with this unique lesson program in golf. Now any interested youth aged seven and up can learn how to golf. It is a beginner class and will be conducted by Ang Puma, an expert instructor. In addition to working on how to swing, other topics covered include golf rules, scoring, etiquette, dress, accessories and club selection. Classes will be held at the Georgetown Memorial Arena, Wednesdays, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. commencing tonight, Apr. 19, continuing six weeks to May 24. Cost is \$20 and participants must provide his/her own clubs. For registration information please refer to the Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department's Spring and Summer Brochure or call 877-5185 extension 260.

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