

Complete games vanishing.

Adjustments needed as baseball changes

By John Grabowski

Baseball, despite its emphasis on tradition, can't halt evolution.

Artificial turf, domed stadiums and free agency are some of the modern changes that, for better or worse, have affected the game.

Another key development has been the decline through the years of complete games by starting pitchers. The complete game is slowly, but steadily going the way of the dodo. Why? It has to do with the emergence of lively baseballs, relief specialists and, more recently, designated hitters.

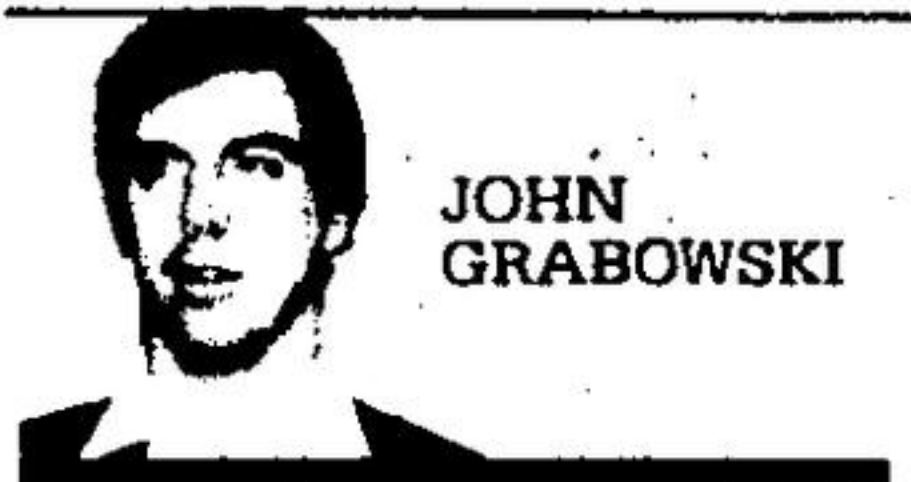
It's safe to predict there will be fewer complete games hurled in the 1990s than in any other decade.

The number of complete games pitched in the majors from 1901 through 1909 was 16,972. Since then, however, the totals have been: 1910-19 - 13,691; 1920-29 - 12,233; 1930-39 - 10,980; 1940-49 - 10,555; 1950-59 - 8,290; 1960-69 - 8,053; 1970-79 - 10,039; and 1980-89 - 6,349.

As you can see, the total fell in every decade except the 1970s. That blip in the curve is explained by the arrival of the designated hitter in the American League. Due to expansion, meanwhile, there were also more complete games tossed in the National League in the 1970s than in the 1960s.

However, the percentage of complete games tossed by NL pitchers actually dropped to 22.5 in the 1970s - from 27.1 in the 1960s. Meanwhile, thanks to the DH, the percentage of complete games in the AL rose to 28.0 in the '70s - from 23.4 in the 1960s. This marked the only percentage increase in either league in a succeeding decade.

Last season was the all-time low for complete games - only 483 were tossed in the NL and AL combined. That's 27 fewer than the previous record, which was set during the strike-



JOHN GRABOWSKI

shortened 1981 season. (Just 1,394 games were played in 1981; a total of 2,106 were played in 1989.)

The overall figures are dramatic: The American League percentage of complete games has dropped from 78.5 in the 1901-09 era to 17.8 in 1980-89. The figures for the National League are even more pronounced: from 79.1 percent (1901-09) to 13.1

percent (1980-89).

As little as 10 years can make a big difference in the game of baseball.

The major-league leader in complete games in 1980 was Rick Langford of Oakland. He had a total of 28. Last year, only one major-league team had more than 28 complete games - California's pitchers had 32.

As the number of complete games has dropped, the number of saves obviously has risen. This is the era of the relief ace.

Although saves were not officially introduced until 1969, they have been calculated retroactively by researchers - and they are credited as such in today's baseball record books.

By decade, these are the totals in

the major leagues for saves: 1901-09 - 605; 1910-19 - 1,459; 1920-29 - 1,817; 1930-39 - 2,176; 1940-49 - 2,425; 1950-59 - 3,465; 1960-69 - 6,140; 1970-79 - 7,477; and 1980-89 - 9,479.

Thus, as the rate of complete games in the majors has fallen from nearly 79 percent in the first decade of the century to 16 percent in the 1980s, the rate of saves has risen from less than 3 percent to 23 percent.

Do you know who Jack Taylor was? He could finish what he started.

Taylor, a hardy right-hander who pitched for the St. Louis Cardinals, set a record in 1904 that will never be broken.

He hurled a total of 39 complete

games in a row, for a string of 352 innings without being relieved. By the way, he also pitched in relief twice during his streak of complete games as a starter.

Taylor wound up the season with a 21-19 record and an ERA of 2.22. His total of 39 complete games was the best in the National League that year.

The 1990 season may very well be the first in which a pitcher leads a major league in complete games without reaching double figures. The lowest league-leading total ever for complete games was 10 - set in the National League last year by Tim Belcher of Los Angeles and Bruce Hurst of San Diego.

© 1990 NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.

Georgetown Auto-Glass

COMPLETE AUTO UPHOLSTERY

- SEAT COVERS
- VINYL TOPS
- SUN ROOFS
- WINDSHIELDS

INSURANCE CLAIMS WELCOMED

313 ARMSTRONG AVE. GEORGETOWN 877-7433

BEARLY USED AUTO PARTS INC.

WE BUY USED & DISABLED VEHICLES

LARGE STOCK OF USED AND REBUILT PARTS

6th Line Halton Hills 877-6226

Park Avenue Collision Inc.

COMPLETE COLLISION SERVICE

UNIBODY SPECIALISTS FOREIGN & DOMESTIC

FREE ESTIMATES

41 PARK AVE. GEORGETOWN 877-3528

"YOUR ONE STOP CAR CARE CENTRE"

TIDY CAR

KEEPING CARS IN SHAPE THROUGHOUT

265 GUELPH ST., GEORGETOWN 873-0570

Firestone

COMPLETE QUALITY CAR CARE

AUTO IMPORT TRUCKS... PERFORMANCE TIRES

(AT HALTON HILLS TIRE) 68A Main St. N. 877-5119

COMMUNITY SPORTS CALENDAR

ATTENTION ALL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS!

To Place Your Upcoming EVENT or Post Your RESULTS Phone Colin Gibson Sportsline 877-2201 or Fax 877-4960

PARK LINCOLN MERCURY

HIGHWAY NO. 7 BETWEEN ACTON & GEORGETOWN

SALES - SERVICE - LEASING

877-2261

Big-League Pitching

Complete games in the 1980's

Year	NL	AL	Total
1980	307	549	856
1981	176	334	510
1982	289	445	734
1983	276	469	745
1984	234	398	632
1985	267	360	627
1986	224	355	579
1987	189	372	561
1988	270	352	622
1989	218	265	483

(Note: 1981 was a strike-shortened season)

POMPEI PIZZERIA

SERVING GEORGETOWN & AREA FOR OVER 20 YEARS

FAST, FREE LOCAL DELIVERY

72-C MAIN ST. N. GEORGETOWN 877-5281

SATURDAY

Hockey

Acton House League Hockey Association year-end banquet at Acton Legion. Banquet starts at 12 noon, presentations and awards at 1:30 p.m.

SUNDAY

Equestrian Competition

Combined Two Phase Dressage and Stadium Jumping competition at Georgetown Myrddin Stables located one mile west of Trafalgar Road on the south side of 17 Sideroad. All day event.

FERO WASTE DISPOSAL

COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL RESIDENTIAL WASTE & RUBBISH REMOVAL

25 STEELES E., MILTON 875-3376

BUCCANEER DIVE SHOP

SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS • TRAVEL

All Levels of Training From Beginner to Professional

283 Rutherford St. BRAMPTON, ONT. 453-7425

SOCCER

Georgetown Youth Soccer Club winter soccer school at Georgetown District High School. Sessions run from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. through May 13. Coaches welcome to attend. For more information contact: George Baines, 877-5573; Bill Harrison, 877-4501; Isobel McNeily, 873-1073 or Paul Stubbins, 877-2692.

SOCCER

Acton Minor Soccer Association conditioning sessions at McKenzie-Smith School gymnasium. 7-8 yrs., 1-1:45 p.m.; 9-11 yrs., 1:45-2:30 p.m.; 15 yrs. and over, 3:15-4 p.m. Running shoes required, no soccer shoes. Free admission. For more information contact Steve Bailey, 853-3866 or Paul Hill, 853-1834.

FERO TRUCK & GEAR

TRUCK SPECIALISTS

- CLUTCHES
- TRANSMISSIONS
- DIFFERENTIALS

25 STEELES AVE. E. MILTON, ONTARIO 876-1981

HALTON HILLS TAXI

877-1234

877-7400 877-9311

AIRPORT SERVICE PARCEL DELIVERY

MONDAY

BRIDGE

Duplicate Bridge, open competition. Starting at 1 p.m. at Georgetown Royal Canadian Legion Branch 120 on Mill Street.

GILLETT

HAULAGE - EXCAVATING

R.R. 2 Stewarttown

- Top Soil
- Sand - Gravel
- Trenching
- Excavating
- Septic Systems

KEITH GILLETT 877-7380



THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Call Display Advertising 877-2201

EAGLE LANDSCAPING LTD.

Complete Lawn Maintenance Professional Landscaping And Design Quality Workmanship

FREE ESTIMATES 873-1200

BOUCHER ALUMINUM

SELECTION OF COLOURS

- SOFFIT & FASCIA
- 5" SEAMLESS EAVESTROUGH
- STORM DOORS
- STORM WINDOWS

FREE ESTIMATES 877-8830

Beaumont Music

PROP. ROD BEAUMONT

- INSTRUMENTS
- ACCESSORIES
- SONG BOOKS
- LESSONS

130D Guelph St. 877-4919

TWISS FUELS LTD.

24 HR. RUBBER SERVICE INSTALLATIONS AUTOMATIC DELIVERY

- HEATING OIL
- LUBRICANTS
- GASOLINE
- DIESEL

EQUALIZED PAYMENT PLAN

32 STEELES AVE. MILTON 878-6380

Lloyd's Service Centre

Limehouse

Prop: Lloyd Brown

Licensed Mechanic

REPAIRS TO ALL MAKES & MODELS

Open Sat. 8 'til Noon

Shell LIMEHOUSE 873-1550

Leathertown LUMBER

YOUR COMPLETE CENTRE FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT & DO-IT-YOURSELF

264 Main St. N. ACTON 853-1970

HOWELL

PLUMBING SUPPLIES LIMITED

SEE OUR SELECTION OF:

- ACRYLIC BATHS & SHOWER UNITS
- WHIRLPOOLS
- VANITIES

11 Armstrong Ave. 877-2293

Make your move.

PARTICIPATION

NISSAN NORTH END NISSAN

610 MARTIN STREET MILTON, ONTARIO 878-4137

Established 1973

HALTON HILLS COLLISION

R.R. 1, ACTON, ONT. 853-2860