

# A Schott From The Bleachers

## Four Home Runs in a Game One of Baseball's Rarest Feats

by

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When Mike Cameron and Shawn Greene joined baseball's select group by hitting four home runs in a single game last month (May 2002), they became only the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> players to perform this feat in major league history, which began in 1876.

This prompted the question: *What are the chances of attending a big league game in which a batter hits four home runs?*

Through the end of the 2001 season, here are the facts to consider:

**165,525**

games played in the AL and NL from 1876 through 2001

*divided by*

**12**

occurrences of a four home run game from 1876 through 2001

*equals*

**14,044**

So, your chances of witnessing a 4-homer game on any given day between 1876 and 2001 would be one in 14,044. Presumably, if you saw 14,044 games you could then reasonably expect to see a 4-homer game. However, given a full 162-game schedule each season, it would take over 86 years to see 14,044 games.

Since the major leagues operated for 126 years (1876 – 2001), it could be said that a 4-homer game happened, on average, every 10.4 years. 2002 is the only year in which there were two occurrences.

Nearly 36 years passed between Ed Delahanty's 4-homer game in 1896 and Lou Gehrig's in 1932. However, only 21 days passed between Cameron's 4-homer game and Green's.

Neither Hank Aaron nor Babe Ruth, baseball's top two career home run men, ever hit four in a single game. That leaves Willie Mays as the top career home run hitter with a 4-homer game.

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The first hitter ever to achieve the feat, Bobby Lowe, appeared in 1,821 games in his career, and in 7,078 official at-bats he produced only 71 homers.

His home run output is one in every 25.6 games, or one homer every 99.7 times at bat. The old expression, *"Take nothing for granted in baseball"* certainly applies in his case.

Bobby Lowe	Boston (NL)	May 30, 1894
Ed Delahanty	Philadelphia (NL)	July 13, 1896
Lou Gehrig	New York (AL)	June 3, 1932
Chuck Klein	Philadelphia (NL)	July 10, 1936 ■
Pat Seerey	Chicago (AL)	July 18, 1948 ■■
Gil Hodges	Brooklyn (NL)	August 31, 1950
Joe Adcock	Milwaukee (NL)	July 31, 1954
Rocky Colavito	Cleveland (AL)	June 10, 1959
Willie Mays	San Francisco (NL)	April 30, 1961
Mike Schmidt	Philadelphia (NL)	April 17, 1976 ■
Bob Horner	Atlanta (NL)	July 6, 1986
Mark Whitten	St. Louis (NL)	September 7, 1993
Mike Cameron	Seattle (AL)	May 2, 2002
Shawn Green	Los Angeles (NL)	May 23, 2002

■ – 10-inning game  
■■ – 11-inning game  
(Compiled by Arthur O. Schott)

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