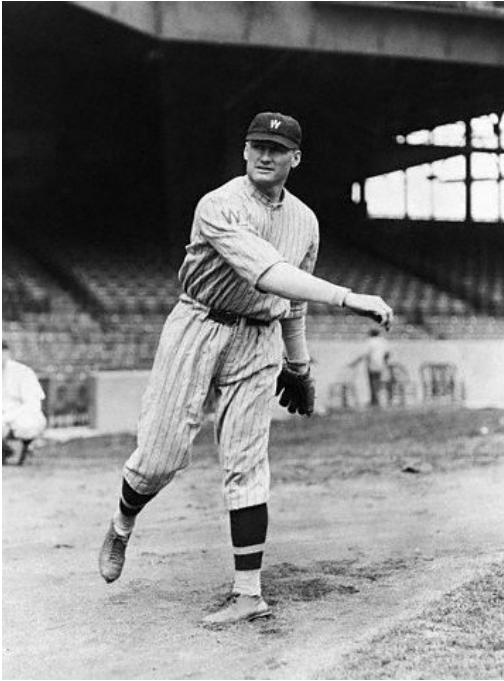


Walter Johnson's Greatest Pitching Performance

by Jay Gauthreaux



A member of the Society for American Baseball Research



One of the most spectacular pitching performances of this century occurred on September 4, 5 and 7, 1908, when Walter Johnson of the Washington Senators shut out the New York Highlanders (later the Yankees) three times in four days.

With the Senators short on pitching due to assorted maladies, Walter was asked to pitch three games against the Highlanders in New York.

The first game, Friday, September 4th, Johnson was up to the task, beating New York ace "Happy Jack" Chesboro, 3 – 0. Johnson allowed only six hits. The next day, Saturday, in "iron man" fashion, the Big Train allowed New York just four hits in handing the Highlanders their second

straight shutout, 6 – 0.

After a day off due to the blue laws in New York at that time, Walter Johnson continued to cast his spell over New York's bats as he defeated Jack Chesboro on two hits while striking out five.

One may compare Johnson's three shutouts to what Christy Mathewson accomplished in the World Series of 1905 for the New York Giants against the Philadelphia Athletics. In three complete game appearances Mathewson faced 92 batters, gave up 14 hits, struck out 18 and walked just one. Matty held the A's to an average of .152 in the Series. In Johnson's three consecutive shutouts three years later, he faced 91 batters and allowed only 12 hits. He struck out 12 and walked just one.

In seven appearances against New York in 1908, Johnson won four and lost two with one no-decision. For the 1908 season, Johnson's first full season in the American League, he posted only a .500 record (14 – 14) despite a fine 1.65 ERA. Six of his fourteen victories in 1908 were by shutout.

The high water mark of the Big Train's brilliant career came in 1913 when he posted a 36 – 7 record and an ERA of 1.14. Johnson led the AL in several categories in 1913, including strikeouts with 243 and shutouts with 11. Amazingly, he walked on 38.

Walter Johnson - 1908

Date	AB	IP	H	K
September 4th	30	9	6	4
September 5th	31	9	4	3
September 7th	30	9	2	5
TOTAL	91	27	12	12

Christy Mathewson – 1905

Date	AB	IP	H	K
October 9th	31	9	4	6
October 12th	30	9	4	8
October 14th	31	9	6	4
TOTAL	92	27	14	18