

BASEBALL HISTORY

by
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Greatest Pitching Staff, Top to Bottom?

Way back in 1904, the Boston entry in the American League, then known as the Pilgrims, held off the New York Highlanders (later known as the Yankees) in a stirring finish to win the league pennant by 1-1/2 games. They were eager to do battle with the New York Giants in only the second World Series ever contested. However, for a variety of reasons, Giants president John Brush and manager John McGraw refused to participate, and thus that summer's campaign ended in controversy.

So Boston was denied the opportunity to defend the title it had won in the inaugural World Series in 1903 against Pittsburgh.

The Boston pitching staff featured three 20-game winners on each of their pennant-winning teams of 1903 – 1904. But the 1904 staff, led by the legendary Cy Young, accomplished something that no other 20th century (or 21st century) team has ever done. Many teams have come close, but no other can boast of a pitching staff where every man had a winning record.

1904 Boston (A.L.)			
Pitcher	W	L	Pct.
Cy Young	26	16	.619
Bill Dineen	23	14	.622
Jesse Tannehill	21	11	.656
Norwood Gibson	17	14	.548
George Winter	8	4	.667

There have been a number of other ballclubs with only one pitcher with a losing record. Listed below are all of the teams that had no pitchers with losing records, but had pitchers with even (.500) records and/or no decisions.

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Club	No. of Pitchers	Winning Records	.500 Records	No Decisions	Finish	Following Year
1904 Boston (AL)	5	5	None	None	1 st - AL	4 th - AL
1906 Chicago (AL)	8	5	2	1	WS Champs	3 rd - AL
1906 New York (AL)	11	8	2	1	2 nd - AL	5 th - AL
1910 Philadelphia (AL)	8	6	2	None	WS Champs	WS Champs
1912 New York (NL)	12	9	None	3	1 st - NL	1 st - NL
1931 New York (AL)	12	9	2	1	2 nd - AL	WS Champs
1931 St. Louis (NL)	9	8	1	None	WS Champs	7 th - NL
1935 St. Louis (NL)	17	7	3	7	2 nd - NL	3 rd - NL
1942 Brooklyn (NL)	15	11	1	3	2 nd - NL	3 rd - NL
1943 St. Louis (NL)	11	10	1	None	1 st - NL	WS Champs
1950 Boston (AL)	20	11	1	8	3 rd - AL	3 rd - AL
1970 Baltimore (AL)	12	7	3	2	WS Champs	AL Champs
1974 Cincinnati (NL)	15	11	1	3	2 nd - NL West	WS Champs
1975 Cincinnati (NL)	12	11	None	1	WS Champs	WS Champs
1991 Pittsburgh (NL)	17	9	4	4	1 st - NL East	1 st NL East

In 1975, the Cincinnati Reds, better known for their offensive skills, had only one pitcher without a winning record. His 0 – 0 record represented only 2 innings of work.

And what happened to the 1905 pitchers? The fall from the pedestal was swift, as the nine-man staff struggled throughout the year. They limped home in 4th place, 16 games behind the first-place Philadelphia A's. Of the five holdovers, only Jesse Tannehill managed a winning record, 22 – 10, nearly duplicating his 1905 numbers.

In 1906, the Pilgrims landed with a loud thud in the cellar, only two years removed from the glory days of 1904.

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