

## Baseball & Safety

By Paul Schuberg

**A**vid baseball fans often ascribe to the adage that “baseball is a metaphor for life.” With baseball season in full swing, let’s consider a few analogies between baseball and safety.

**ERA** (earned run average) and **IFR** (incident frequency rate). ERA is a critical pitching statistic based on runs allowed per 9 innings. IFR is based on OSHA recordables divided by total hours x 200,000. While a significant indicator of success, wins and severe injuries (or lack of) still trumps. (Still, I’d be thrilled with St. Louis Cardinals great Bob Gibson’s 1968 ERA of 1.12 as an IFR.)

**LOB** (left on base) is a painful number for coaches/managers and frustrated pitchers when high. **DAFW** (days away from work), which is an entry you’d like to avoid on the OSHA 300 form. Generally, a serious injury or illness, or a lost-time incident fortifies that notion of hidden costs when production drops, not to mention the pain and suffering of the injured worker . . . or that a kid threw a really good game but got no run support.

**RBI** (runs batted in) is a highly valued data point indicative of timely at bats where most runs are scored. **JHA** (job hazard analysis) scores safety points because it helps employers develop thoughtful task sequences, identify potential hazards and plan corrective action. Players can drive in runs in many ways (e.g., hits, walks, sacrifice flies, grounders), just as employers have many options for executing and implementing successful job safety planning.

**WP** (wild pitch) can be costly when runners are on base, particularly in scoring position. A second or third errant toss in an inning, the dreaded lead-off or multiple walks, and out comes the hook. **NM** (near-miss/hit, close call) happens when an incident that could produce injury or harm nearly occurs but does not (e.g., overreaching on a ladder and feeling it tip, but catching yourself just in time to prevent a fall). Hopefully, you learn and adjust practices. Otherwise, you risk a deadly mistake (a figurative hook from the Grim Reaper).

**DP** (double play) is a pitcher’s best friend. Executed well, it’s a thing of beauty to a baseball fan. As a batter, hitting into one at a critical juncture can cause momentary disgust. But the beauty of baseball is swift redemption with the next at-bat or fielding opportunity. **PPE** is a worker’s best friend as the last line of defense after elimination, engineering and administrative controls. If you forget to use gloves or protective eyewear and get injured, you are angry for your mistake, but redeem yourself by never neglecting those essential items again.

Now step up to the plate and knock one out of the park for safety and health. Whatever you do to improve your game, always take good swings, throw hard and be ready to snag that line drive. Most importantly, keep your teammates fired up so they’ll do the same for you. It’s a great day for safety and baseball. Let’s play two.

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“You gotta be a man to play baseball for a living, but you gotta have a lot of little boy in you, too.”

Roy Campanella

## On-the-Field Facts

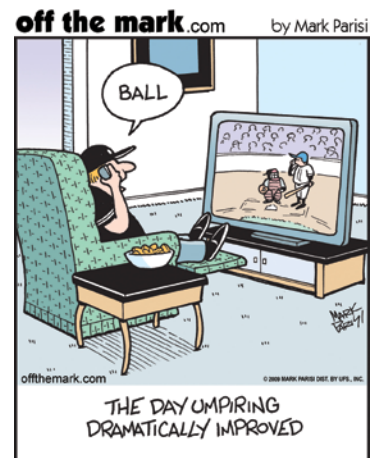
•**Jimmy Piersall** celebrated his 100th home run by running the bases backwards. The eccentric player, who battled bipolar disorder, was famous for such stunts. He also walked up to bat wearing a Beatles wig, talked to Babe Ruth’s monument at Yankee Stadium and climbed a grandstand roof to heckle an umpire. His backwards homerun trot cost him his spot with the New York Mets.

•**Don Baylor** played in three straight World Series for three different teams: 1986 (Red Sox), 1987 (Twins) and 1988 (Athletics). Only the Twins took home the trophy.

•**Bobby Richardson** is the only player in MLB history to be named World Series MVP for a losing team. Richardson played for the Yankees in the 1960 series, in which the Pittsburgh Pirates pulled a stunning upset.

•**Clarence Blethen** was a Boston Red Sox pitcher who wore false teeth. Thinking he looked meaner with his teeth out when pitching, he would place his false teeth in his back pocket. One day, he forgot to remove the teeth from his pocket before running the bases. As he slid into second, his teeth clamped down.

Bleacher Report



“Baseball is a game where a curve is an optical illusion, a screwball can be a pitch or a person, stealing is legal, and you can spit anywhere you like except in the umpire’s eye or on the ball.”

Jim Murray

Congratulations to **Rod Lynch** of ASSE’s Southwestern Ohio Chapter for his winning caption contest entry, which appears below the photo.

June Safety Photo of the Month



“Unsafe acts, that’s how I roll.”

Photo by Michael Testa, Colorado Chapter

If you have a cartoon, anecdote, joke or interesting safety item you’d like to submit for publication on this page, send your contribution to [professionalsafety@asse.org](mailto:professionalsafety@asse.org). Submissions will not be returned.