

## Chapter 7

# Cincinnati Reds

In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings played in the first game ever by a professional baseball team. At 57–0, they had the longest winning streak in the sport’s history and supposedly won more of them including exhibition games. After the club retained all players in 1870, its unbeaten streak extended to 81 games before the Brooklyn Atlantics defeated them in extra innings.<sup>1</sup>

When the Red Stockings lost many of their players and disbanded following the loss to the Atlantics, their nickname was adopted in Boston where, in 1871, a new team featuring some of Cincinnati’s former stars began playing games as the Boston Red Stockings in the National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP). As a result, a Cincinnati Reds, also known as Red Stockings, team became a charter member of the National League (NL) in 1876. However, it was expelled from the league after the 1880 season for violating such rules as serving beer at games and allowing other teams to rent and use their ballpark on Sundays.

Another Cincinnati team formed in 1881 and became a founding member of the American Association (AA), a rival professional baseball league that began play in 1882. That team played eight seasons in the AA and won the league’s pennant in 1882. Eight years later, the Red Stockings and Brooklyn Dodgers left the AA to join the NL. Subsequently, Cincinnati changed its nickname from “Red Stockings” to “Reds” in 1878.

Next are some important concepts, topics, and historical facts about the Reds or alternatively Red Stockings (1876–1877) and then simply Reds (1878–2014), and the franchise’s performances while in the NL. This information includes dates and special managers, players, and events regarding the team during its years competing in regular seasons and postseasons of the league and in some of them as a member of the Central or West Division.

---

<sup>1</sup>See such books as Frank P. Jozsa Jr., *Baseball, Inc.: The National Pastime as Big Business* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006), and James Quirk and Rodney D. Fort, *Pay Dirt: The Business of Professional Team Sports* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

## Team Performances

### *Franchise Timeline*

The Red Stockings, who played their home games at the Avenue Grounds, were managed by Charlie Gould in 1876 and finished the season with a dismal 9–56 record and last in the new eight-team NL. One year later, Lip Pike and then Bob Addy and finally Jack Manning managed the Red Stockings to sixth place and last again since the league had expelled the New York Mutuals and Philadelphia Athletics. After being renamed Reds in the 1878 season, player/manager Cal McVey piloted Cincinnati to second place. Sharing the managing duties in 1879, McVey and catcher Deacon White led the team to fifth place. Then, before the league kicked it out for rule violations, Cincinnati finished its 1880 season in eighth.<sup>2</sup>

After being readmitted into the NL to join teams based in Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, the Cincinnati Reds finished fourth in 1890. Then, in April 1891, an opening day parade was organized by new team owner John T. Brush. The parade consisted of Webber's military band and two large horse-drawn wagons called tallyhos, which were occupied by players from the Reds and their opponents, the Cleveland Spiders.

From 1890 to 1918, the Reds had mediocre performances. Then, in 1919, the team won the NL pennant by nine games and then its first championship in a best-of-eight game series against the American League (AL) Chicago White Sox. Unfortunately, the club's title was tarnished because several members of the White Sox allegedly "threw" the Series.

During the 1930s, several events occurred for the franchise. First, in 1934, the Reds became the first team in Major League Baseball (MLB) history to use an airplane to travel from one city to another (Cincinnati to Chicago). Second, Cincinnati's Johnny Vander Meer made baseball history in 1938 by pitching a second consecutive no-hitter beating the Boston Braves at home and then the Dodgers at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn. Third, the Reds clinched their first NL pennant in 20 years after defeating the Cardinals in late September 1939 at Crosley Field. Despite Cincinnati pitchers Bucky Walters and Paul Derringer, the AL New York Yankees won the World Series in four games.

From 1940 to 1969, the Reds won two NL pennants and one World Series. The latter championship occurred in 1940 because of pitchers Walters and Derringer and NL Most Valuable Player (MVP) Frank McCormick who had 191 hits and 127 runs batted in (RBIs). Also, Cincinnati's Lonny Frey harassed opponents in games by stealing 22 bases.

The 1970s were the Reds' most memorable decade of performances. After winning the NL pennant by more than 14 games in 1970, the Reds swept the Pittsburgh Pirates in the NL Champion Series (NLCS) but lost the World Series to the AL Baltimore Orioles in five games. In 1972, the Reds scored two runs in the bottom of the ninth to

---

<sup>2</sup>Each MLB team has a franchise timeline. It is <http://www.cincinnati.reds.mlb.com>.

defeat the Pirates in the fifth and deciding game of the NLCS. But 11 days later, the AL Oakland Athletics beat them in seven games and won the World Series.

In 1975 and 1976, the Reds won more than 100 games each season in the NL West Division and defeated the Pirates and then the Philadelphia Phillies, respectively, in the NLCS. The 1975 World Series was exciting by featuring five one-run games between the Reds and AL Boston Red Sox. Boston catcher Carlton Fisk's legendary twelfth-inning home run in Game 6 tied the series, but Cincinnati won the championship in seven games, in part, because MVP Pete Rose helped his team to its come-from-behind victories. One year later, Cincinnati's so-called Big Red Machine of players won another World Series.

After finishing first once and second three times during the 1980s, the Reds clinched the 1990 Western Division title and became the only NL team to occupy first place the entire regular season. After edging the Pirates in the NLCS, the Reds defeated heavily favored Oakland to win their fifth World Series championship.

Five years later, Cincinnati swept the Dodgers in three games to win the NL Division Series (NLDS). But in the NLCS, the Atlanta Braves beat the Reds in four games. Cincinnati's Barry Larkin was the 1995 NL MVP by setting a club record for shortstops with a 0.319 batting average and a modern club record of 51 stolen bases.

In a September 1999 game against the Phillies at Veterans Stadium, eight different Reds each hit home runs (HRs) in a total of nine times at bat. In fact, Cincinnati clouted 209 HRs during the season, the most since the 1956 squad's 221. After finishing the regular season tied for the NL wild card spot, the Reds fell to the New York Mets in the sixth one-game playoff in MLB history.

Before 2003, the NL Reds played their home games for 4 years at the Avenue Grounds, one at Bank Street Grounds, twelve at League Park, ten at Palace of the Fans, 59 at Crosley Field, and 33 at Riverfront Stadium—renamed Cinergy Field in 1996. Six years later, more than 25,000 spectators were in downtown Cincinnati to view the destruction of Cinergy Field in less than a minute. Then, in March 2003, the Reds hosted one of the most anticipated openers in club history with the debut of the 42,000-seat Great American Ball Park.

While putting together their first successful season since 2000, the Reds won 91 games in 2010 under manager Dusty Baker and reached the playoffs for the first time in 15 years by winning the NL Central Division. The lineup was led by Joey Votto, Scott Rolen, Jonny Gomes, Drew Stubbs, and Brandon Phillips, while Jay Bruce notched a career-high 25 HRs. Pitcher Bronson Arroyo won a career-high 17 games, and Johnny Cueto, Travis Wood, and Logan Ondrusek played pivotal roles. But in the NLDS, the Phillies swept the Reds in three games.

The Reds' 2012 season was important for the present and future when cornerstone players Joey Votto and Brandon Phillips signed long-term contracts. The Reds won 97 games and their second NL Central Division title in three seasons. Pitcher Johnny Cueto had a career-high 19 victories, Aroldis Chapman saved 38 games, and Jay Bruce won a Silver Slugger Award. In other ways, this was a tough year as manager Dusty Baker suffered a minor stroke near the end of the regular season and missed several games. After Baker returned, Cincinnati endured a crushing ouster from the NLDS to the eventual World Series champion San Francisco Giants in five games.

Amid players' injuries, the Reds won 90 games in 2013 but still finished third behind the Cardinals and Pirates in the ultra-competitive NL Central Division. Cincinnati reached the postseason for the third time in four seasons as the second wild card team. Disappointment came again as the Reds were ousted in a one-game playoff at Pittsburgh to end their season on a six-game losing streak. These losses cost manager Baker his job with pitching coach Bryan Price taking Baker's place in late October.

Despite their slow start in 2014, Cincinnati was in the playoff race with a 51–44 record. However, the team went into a tailspin following the all-star game in July, losing their first seven games in the regular season's second-half. During August, they had a second seven-game losing streak, as they won just nine and faded out as a contender for a wild card and finished in fourth place in their division at 76–86.

### ***Team Highlights***

In total for the 1876–1880 and 1890–2014 MLB seasons, the Reds won 9,851 of their games or approximately 51 % of them. In number of all-time wins and then winning percentage among NL teams as of 2014, the club ranked third and then tied for fourth percentagewise with the Cubs and Giants. Although this Cincinnati franchise is above average in its total wins, it has fewer of them than the Cubs and Pirates in the league's Central Division. Also, the Braves, Cardinals, and Dodgers had proportionally more victories.<sup>3</sup>

Compared to other NL clubs as of 2014, Reds teams tied for second with the Pirates and Dodgers each with five World Series championships, tied for third with the Pirates and Dodgers with nine league pennants, ranked fifth with 11 division titles, and also sixth with 15 playoff appearances. Historically, this Cincinnati MLB franchise has been above average and during some periods outstanding in its team performances and winning championships and titles (Appendix Table 1).

Since 1876, there have been superior to inferior field managers and players for the Reds franchise. Among the former group in wins is Sparky Anderson with 863, Bill McKechnie 744, Dusty Baker 509, and Pat Moran, Jack Hendricks, Fred Hutchinson, and Pete Rose each with more than 400. While several managers won fewer than 25 games for the franchise especially during the late 1870s, early 1900s, and mid 1930s, Jack McKeon was NL Manager of the Year in 1999. In addition, the team retired Hutchinson's uniform number.

Some Cincinnati players are career leaders who established records for the team as hitters and pitchers. Among hitters, Pete Rose leads in games, at bats, runs, hits, total bases, doubles, and extra-base hits, Edd Roush in triples, Johnny Bench in home runs (HRs) and runs batted in (RBIs), Joe Morgan in stolen bases, and Cy

---

<sup>3</sup>References include the *Official Major League Baseball Fact Book 2005 Edition* (St. Louis, MO: Sporting News, 2005), "Teams," <http://www.baseball-reference.com> cited 28 January 2015 and "National League Team Histories," <http://www.sportsecyclopedia.com> cited 1 May 2015.

Seymour in batting average. Besides them, other significant players as batters were Barry Larkin, Dave Concepcion, Frank Robinson, Vada Pinson, George Foster, Ted Kluszewski, and Tony Pérez. For their performances, Rose, Bench, and Robinson each won NL Rookie of the Year and also Most Valuable Player (MVP) awards, while other MVPs included Morgan, Foster, Larkin, and also Joey Votto, Frank McCormick, Bucky Walters, and Ernie Lombardi. After their careers ended, the team retired uniform numbers of Bench, Morgan, Kluszewski, Robinson, and Pérez.

Being pitchers with memorable performances for Reds teams, there was Pedro Borbón in most games pitched, Danny Graves in saved games, Bucky Walters in shutouts, Eppa Rixey in wins and innings pitched, Jim Maloney in strikeouts, and Bob Ewing in earned run average. Johnny Vander Meer, Joe Nuxhall, Noodles Hahn, Dolf Luque, Bucky Walters, and Paul Derringer also had impressive careers with the club.

During decades, Cincinnati won more games in the 1970s (953) than in each of the 1870s to 1960s and 1980s to 2000s. Furthermore, Reds teams appeared in consecutive playoffs in 1939–1940, 1972–1973, 1975–1976, and 2012–2013. Based on these results, the 1970s were the franchise's most successful years because its teams appeared in four World Series and won two of them. Alternatively, the least successful decades included the 1900s, 1910s, and 1950s.

## Franchise Business

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Robert Castellini graduated with an economics degree from Georgetown University in 1963 and 4 years later obtained his Master of Business Administration from the Wharton School of Business. After graduating from Wharton, Castellini became executive vice-president at the Castellini Group of Companies and then in 1970 was president of it until 1992. The Companies' businesses are perishable distribution, food processing, public warehousing, transportation logistics, and leasing.<sup>4</sup>

Castellini has been involved in MLB for three decades including a minor ownership stake in the Reds as part of the Bob Williams family interest until that was sold to Marge Schott in 1984. He became a partner in baseball organizations such as the Texas Rangers in 1989 and Baltimore Orioles in 1993 and also an investor in the St. Louis Cardinals.

From 2001 to 2005, the Reds had consecutive losing seasons, the club's longest such streak in 50 years. So in January 2006, Castellini led a group that purchased the Reds from owner Carl Lindner for \$270 million after which he became chief executive officer of the franchise and replaced general manager Dan O'Brien with Wayne Krivsky. For various reasons, the Reds became more competitive, finishing third in the Central Division at 80–82. Four years after introducing new team uniforms in the winter of 2006, the Reds won their first division title since 1995.

---

<sup>4</sup>“Bob Castellini,” <http://www.cincinnati.reds.mlb.com> cited 9 August 2015.

## ***Team Financials***

Since 2012, there have been two important, newsworthy, and reputable studies that revealed and used detailed financial data to determine the business success and prosperity of MLB franchises. One study was performed by sportswriters at *Forbes* magazine and published in late 2014, while the other appeared online in an article by Bloomberg Inc.<sup>5</sup>

When completed, the studies had similar conclusions but different amounts for revenue and other financials because of such things as their accounting methodology, data sources, empirical models, years, and types of accounts. Next is what sportswriters at *Forbes* analyzed and reported for the Reds followed by major elements and significant findings contained in the Bloomberg Inc. study.

Regarding data published in *Forbes* for NL franchises, the Reds ranked 10th in market value at \$600 million. Moreover the club's revenue was ninth at \$209 million, gate receipts eighth at \$62 million, and player's payroll fifth at approximately \$112 million. Compared to four other teams in the league's Central Division, the Cubs and Cardinals had the highest market values, revenues, and gate receipts but smaller payrolls than the Reds. Although the division's Brewers and Pirates ranked lowest financially among the group, Cincinnati is still a small-market NL team primarily because of its site and market size, scarce resources, and inability to generate more income from its operations (Appendix Table 2).

With differences reported in the Bloomberg Inc. study for NL teams, the Reds ranked 10th in total market value and ninth as a team. Also, they tied for ninth surprisingly with the Brewers in revenue and placed 10th in gate receipts, 11th in concession sales, 9th in sponsorships, and 10th in media rights and received \$22 million in revenue sharing from the league. Relative to others in its division, Cincinnati's amounts of income were inferior to those of the Cardinals and Cubs but similar to the Brewers' (except for market and team values) and superior to the Pirates. From a financial perspective, the Reds franchise is a mediocre business enterprise despite the team's history of winning regular season games and its popularity, tradition, and number of championships and titles.

## ***Other Business***

In October 2014, the Stadium Journey Magazine (SJM) studied each MLB ballpark according to a scale that included food and beverage in the ballpark, overall atmosphere, neighborhood where the stadium was located, fans, access (parking, traffic, restrooms, and handicap accessibility), overall return on investment, and any

---

<sup>5</sup>The two studies are, respectively, "The Business of Baseball," <http://www.forbes.com> cited 28 January 2015 and "Major League Baseball Valuations," <http://www.bloomberg.com> cited 2 February 2015.

special or unique features. The ratings of SJM's readers served as the primary tiebreaker and encouraged them to share their views of any team's ballpark.

Among 30 MLB stadiums, the Reds' Great American Ball Park ranked 13th and inferior to the Pirates' PNC Park (second), Cardinals' Busch Stadium (third), and Cubs' Wrigley Field (sixth) but superior to the Brewers' Miller Park (16th). SJM author Paul Swaney said, "Opened for the 2003 season, Great American Ball Park often gets overlooked amongst the crowd of modern ballparks. However, team ownership has been proactively upgrading the ballpark, creating a venue that has grown and matured well over its 12 seasons. The team was rewarded for this with the announcement that GABP will host the 2015 All-Star Game, an honor the city hasn't hosted since 1988. Great American Ball Park has turned into a park befitting of the team's history and is also a major component of the ongoing rebirth of Cincinnati's riverfront."<sup>6</sup>

Annually, Brand Keys Inc. publishes a Sports Fan Loyalty Index (SFLI) for teams in MLB and other professional sports. The SFLI—which provides a comparison of the intensity with corresponding values for fans of other teams in that market—is driven by *pure entertainment* or how exciting is their play; by *authenticity* or how well they play as a team; by *fan bonding* or how well players are respected and admired; and by *history and tradition* or how well the game and team are part of a fan's and community's rituals, institutions, and beliefs. Among 30 teams in 2014, the Reds were tied for 11th in the SFLI, and within the NL Central Division, they ranked better than the Brewers (thirteenth), Cubs (seventeenth), and Pirates (tied for eighteenth) but worse than the Cardinals (first).<sup>7</sup>

Among fans and officials in baseball, there was speculation that the Reds would rebuild and slash their payroll after finishing fourth in the NL West Division in 2014 and trading starting pitchers Mat Latos and Alfredo Simon in the offseason. But owner Bob Castellini, who spends a higher percentage of revenue on players than most MLB teams, has invested more money into the club as revenues have risen in recent years.

Even though the team's payroll increased from \$73 million in 2009 to almost \$113 million in 2014, Castellini said the Reds payroll will be higher in 2015. Since he acquired the team in 2006, Castellini maintains that the Reds budget their expenditures and revenues to break even. Soon, a new local television deal is likely to provide the team with much more cash. The Reds' current deal averages about \$20 million a year from Fox Sports Ohio. But it expires after the 2017 season, and a new deal, worth at least twice that amount, is expected to be negotiated and approved by the franchise and broadcast network.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>For information and also rankings, read Paul Swaney, "2014 MLB Ballpark Experience Rankings," <http://www.stadiumjourney.com> cited 23 February 2015.

<sup>7</sup>Sources are Barry Janoff, "Report: When It Comes to 2014 MLB Fans, the Most Loyal Group is the Cards," <http://www.nysportsjournalism.com> cited 23 February 2015 and "MLB Team Loyalty Winners and Losers," <http://www.brandkeys.com> cited 14 February 2015.

<sup>8</sup>An interesting business article about the Reds franchise is "Coast to Coast: Reds Extend With PNC Bank," *SportsBusiness Journal* (28 February 2011):26.