STRAT-O-MATIC NEWS®

Play it Again — the Dramatic 2014 NFL

This is what Strat-O-Matic simulations were made for — the chance to relive, and perhaps rewrite, the memorable moments in sports. After the controversial NFL playoffs and unforgettable Super Bowl, you can make things happen.

Seattle wants a rematch! And when you see the running cards of Russell Wilson and Marshawn Lynch, your goal-line call just might be different than Pete Caroll's.

Indianapolis wants a rematch! When you see Andrew Luck's 40-TD passing card and his receivers, you might want to try again with fully inflated footballs.

Green Bay wants a rematch! When you see Aaron Rodgers' passing and his explosive receivers, you won't fuss over a muffed onside kick.

But it still will be tough to beat New England's Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski, who led all tight ends with 1,124 receiving yards. The Patriots were the first team since the 1970s to win six straight division titles, then played better in the post-season.

You could do it, though, with Denver, the AFC West champs for the fourth straight season and WRs Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders combining for more than 3,000 receving yards. Or with Dallas: DeMarco Murray led the NFL with 1,845 rushing yards, Dez Bryant led with 16 TD catches and Tony Romo was third with 34 TD passes.

Serious D

For defense, go west to Seattle, or shuffle off to Buffalo, where three Pro Bowl defensive linemen led the Bills to 54 sacks. Detroit's vastly improved D yielded only 282 points, third best in the NFL. Defensive Player of the Year J.J. Watt had 20.5 sacks for Houston. Kansas City linebacker Justin Houston had 22 sacks and Baltimore pass-rush specialist Elvis Dumervil had 17.

But most everywhere else, the footballs flew. Eleven passers topped 4,000 yards (Drew Brees and Ben Roethlisberger nearly reached 5,000) and nine threw for at least 30 TDs. Pittsburgh's Antonio Brown led 23 1,000-yard receivers with 1,698. Denver, Green Bay, Carolina, Detroit and Tampa Bay each had a pair of 1,000-yard pass catchers.

And there's the best rookie wide receiver class ever: Rookie of the Year Odell Beckham, Mike Evans and Kelvin Benjamin each topped 1,000 yards. Sammy Watkins, Jordan Matthews, Jarvis Landry, Brandin Cooks, Donte Moncrief, Allen Robinson and Allen Hurns made big impressions.

Racehorses, Workhorses

Though Murray won the rushing title by nearly 500 yards, six other backs ran for at least 1,200 yards; 13 ran for at least 1,000. The workhorses included Pittsburgh's Le'Veon Bell, who was second in the NFL with 1,361 yards rushing. He added 83 receptions for a combined 2,215 yards from scrimmage and 11 TDs. Lynch, Kansas City's Jamaal Charles and Philadelphia's LeSean McCoy also topped 1,300 yards. Balimore's Justin Forsett topped 1,200 and will have Long Gains guessed Right. Cincinnati rookie Jeremy Hill started only seven games, but ran for 1,124 yards on a 5.1 average with 9 TDs.

New this Summer from Strat-O-Matic

Football

Strat-O-Matic Pro Football 2015
2014 NFL season
1975 NFL season
1961 NFL + AFL season
Strat-O-Matic College Football 2015
   with the 2014 NCAA season
ETA: Pro in Early August, College in late August

See Page 3 for exciting new rule options: Split defensive ratings, yards after the catch and more for added realism

Hockey

Strat-O-Matic Hockey 2015
2014-15 NHL season
1983-84 NHL season
1952-53 NHL season
 ETA: Late September

Basketball

Strat-O-Matic Basketball 2015
2014-15 NBA season
1965-66 NBA season (Windows only)
1967-68 ABA season (Windows only)
 ETA: Cards-Late September
   Windows-Late October

The go-to places for Strat-O-Matic announcements and unique discounts:

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EAT. SLEEP. STRAT.
Strat-O-Matic Baseball Online

Football Thrills, Chills with new Rule Options

New Windows Football Features
Best Ever, From Kickoff to Game Replay

Strat-O-Matic Football 2015 has the split defensive ratings, the yards-after-the-catch plays and the Flat-Pass-as-Runs options that will make game play more exciting (see page 3). It has the free Online Draft that lets your entire league draft online in real time (see page 6).

And it has more.

Meeting the demands of its most avid gamers, Strat-O-Matic continues to improve its computer game.

Now, coaches can defer after winning the coin toss, electing to receive the second-half kickoff instead of starting the game that way.

Pass rushing now is much more visual: The matchup flashes, pictures of the combatants appear and the sack percentage is displayed as the dice roll lands (or doesn't) in the sack range.

Play animation is more visual, too — if you have selected the option to display player names on the field, they will show up in animation, as well.

The improvements don't end when the game does. The Game Replay feature now displays an icon to indicate which team has possession of the ball.

A new League Creation verification dialog recaps the information you entered and the options you chose when setting up your league — vital since those choices cannot be changed once accepted. As the game's help file reports, "This has been requested by a number of customers who did not realize until much later on that certain league attributes were not set properly."

From Past to Present: The 1961 NFL and AFL Seasons

Strat-O-Matic builds on its commitment to offer gamers the opportunity to enjoy every era of modern pro football with the release of the 1961 and 1975 seasons.

In 1961, Green Bay (11-3) won its first championship under Vince Lombardi, in a run that would include more titles in 1962, 1965-1967 and the first two Super Bowls.

Complementing a Packer defense with such legends as Willie Davis, Ray Nitschke, Herb Adderley and Willie Wood, FB Jim Taylor powered for 1,307 yards and 15 TDs, while Bart Starr passed to Max McGee, Boyd Dowler and Ron Kramer for at least 16 yards per catch each.

The other carded teams:

New York (10-3-1) had passer Y.A. Tittle, WR Del Shofner and defensive stars Andy Robustelli, Rosey Grier, Sam Huff and Jimmy Patton.

Defending champ Philadelphia (10-4) introduced QB Sonny Jurgensen, who led the NFL with 3,723 yards and 32 TD passes. In Cleveland (8-5-1), FB Jimmy Brown ran for an NFL-best 1,408 yards and HB Bobby Mitchell had 1,508 all-purpose yards.

In the second season of the wild young AFL, Houston (10-3-1) averaged 36.6 points per game with George Blanda throwing for 36 TDs, WR Charlie Hennigan catching 92 passes for 1,766 yards and AFL rushing leader RB Billy Cannon gaining 2,043 yards and scoring 15 TDs. The Oilers upset the defending champion Chargers (12-2) — who had outscored foes 396-219 — for the title.

1975 NFL

In spectacular fashion, 10 teams won at least 10 games. Pittsburgh (12-2) won its second straight Super Bowl, 21-17, over wild-card Dallas (10-4). The Cowboys got there on Roger Staubach's original "Hail Mary" pass.

The Steel Curtain defense was dominant, allowing only 162 points — plenty for an offense with Franco Harris (1,408 yards rushing), QB Terry Bradshaw and WR Lynn Swann.

The Los Angeles Rams (12-2) yielded only 135 before Dallas crushed them, 37-7 in the playoffs.

Other teams in Strat-O-Matic's carded "six-pack" are 12-2 Minnesota with its Purple People Eater defense, the highest-scoring NFC offense and Chuck Foreman's 1,761 yards and 22 TDs; 11-3 St. Louis, with Terry Metcalf's 2,439 all-purpose yards, and 11-3 Oakland with QB Ken Stabler and a defense that intercepted 35 passes.

The Windows game, with all the teams, offers 11-3 Cincinnati with top-rated passer Ken Anderson; 10-4 Baltimore with QB Bert Jones and HB Lydell Mitchell; 10-4 Miami with QB Bob Griese and a stingy defense; 10-4 Houston with 4-TD kick returner Billy "White Shoes" Johnson, and 8-6 Buffalo, with O.J. Simpson's 2,242 yards and 23 TDs.

Feel the Power of the 2014 College Season

The NCAA's first four-team playoff, two Heisman Trophy-winning quarterbacks who were drafted 1-2 by the NFL and record-setting running backs will light up the computer screens as they did the scoreboards at college football stadiums.

With Strat-O-Matic College Football, you can replay the playoff with Ohio State, Oregon, Alabama and Florida State or set up your own, perhaps with highly rated Baylor or TCU.

You can coach the 2014 Heisman winner, Oregon QB Marcus Mariota, or the 2013 winner, Florida State QB Jameis Winston in a rematch of the playoff game won by Oregon or to help decide who you would have drafted No. 1 (it was Winston).

Mariota had the gaudiest stats in a year of sparkling stats — 42 touchdown passes (with only four interceptions) and 15 running TDs. On the receiving end, Alabama WR Amari Cooper (the No. 4 overall NFL draft pick) led the nation and set the Southeastern Conference record with 124 catches, adding 16 TDs.

Until Week 12 of 2014 only one running back in college history had rushed for 400 yards in a game. Within two weeks, two more had done it: Wisconsin's Melvin Gordon set the NCAA record with 408 yards, then Oklahoma freshman Samaja Perine topped that with 427. Or give the ball to Georgia freshman Nick Chubb, who ran for more than 1,500 yards after first-round draft pick Todd Gurley went down for the year.
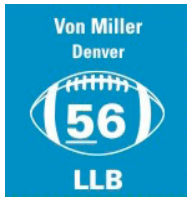
Dynamic Options Add Realism, Explosiveness to SOM's Gridiron

Three revolutionary rule-change options and two statistical refinements that will result in ratings changes add realism, strategy options and explosive plays to Strat-O-Matic Pro Football.

All have been done in ways that will not disturb the 2014 season ratings' compatibility with past seasons.

Strat-O-Matic recommends their use to all who want heightened performance that models today's National Football League.

Split Defensive Ratings: Linebackers and safeties are rated separately for their effectiveness against the pass and the run, helping define their roles (some as specialists) and their value to their teams. The first digit in the two-digit rating is the player's pass defense.

Complete-game and complete-team purchases include custom defensive squares representing individual players on all 30 teams. These squares also can be purchased separately for the nominal price of $5.

Yards After the Catch: Explained at right, this rule highlights the explosive ability of some receivers who turn quick passes into big plays.

Flat Passes as Runs: In today's pass-dominant NFL, quick passes and screens substitute for running plays, driving up completion percentages and encouraging gamers to call "Pass" defense even more often than the NFL goes to the air. The new rule that requires a "Run" call to guess a Flat Pass correctly seeks to restore the balance, while adding strategy considerations.

Quarterback running cards: Most quarterback running cards will reflect a higher average per carry than the stats shown on their cards because yards lost on kneeldowns are now substracted from their stats. Running QBs on winning teams — Russell Wilson, for instance — will benefit the most.

Kickoffs: When the NFL moved kickers five yards closer to the opposing end zone, touchbacks multiplied. But so did touchdown returns originating from deep in the end zone. So SOM is replacing most "Touchback" readings with readings showing the kicks going 8 or 9 yards deep in the end zone. Coaches won't often choose to run those back, but they'll now have that option instead of the automatic touchback.

How Yards-After-the-Catch Works

AARON RODGERS QUARTERBACK — GREEN BAY PASSING CARD

	FLAT PASS			SHORT PASS			LONG PASS		
	RIGHT	**WRONG**	**REC 2-tmd**	**RIGHT**	**WRONG**	**REC 2-tmd**	**RIGHT**	**WRONG**	**REC 2-tmd**
2.	-1			+11	+11			+31	
3.	Short Gain	Short Gain			+17				
4.	+4	+10 (+3)						Long Gain	
5.	+7 (-1)	+9 (+2)	+7	+15	+15				
6.	+5	+8		+12	+12			Receiver	
7.	+6 (-1)	+11 (+3)	+6	+13	+13	+13			
8.	Receiver	Receiver			Receiver		Long Gain	Long Gain	
9.	Receiver	Receiver		must run	+16		must run	must run	
10.		+10		+14	+14	+14	+27	+27	+27
11.		Short Gain						+33	
12.	Int +4, 2-3 X, 4-12	Int +4, 2 X, 3-12	Int+4	Int +16, 2-3 X, 4-12	Int +16, 2 X, 3-12	Int+16	Int +32, 2-4 X, 5-12	Int +32, 2-3 X, 4-12	Int+32

2014 PASSING RECORD				
PASSES ATTEMPTED	PERCENTAGE COMPLETED	YARDS	TOUCHDOWNS	INTERCEPTION PERCENTAGE
520	65.6	4381	38	1.0

GREEN BAY JORDY NELSON PASS RECEIVING CARD

Split End - Def:Right Cornerback

YAC - B

	FLAT PASS			SHORT PASS			LONG PASS		
	Right	**Wrong**	**Rec 2-tmd**	**Right**	**Wrong**	**Rec 2-tmd**	**Right**	**Wrong**	**Rec 2-tmd**
2.	+14	+60		LG	LG			+25	
3.	-1	LG			+12			+73	
4.	+3	+14		+15	+15		+26	+26	
5.	+12	+15		+14	+14				
6.	+7	+8		+17	+17				
7.	+6	+9					+59	+59	
8.		+11		+13	+13		+29	+29	
9.				+18	+18				
10.	+11	+13			LG			+64	
11.	+4	+5			+11				
12.	+8	+10			+66		+80	+80	

2014 PASS RECEIVING RECORD			
NUMBER CAUGHT	YARDS	AVERAGE	LONGEST	TOUCHDOWNS
98	1519	15.5	80•	13

The prototype cards above show the completions followed by parentheses on Aaron Rodgers' Flat Pass columns. They trigger the Yards-After-the-Catch option.

Also note the "YAC" rating in the upper right corner of Jordy Nelson's receiving card. The "B" rating there corresponds to the column at right.
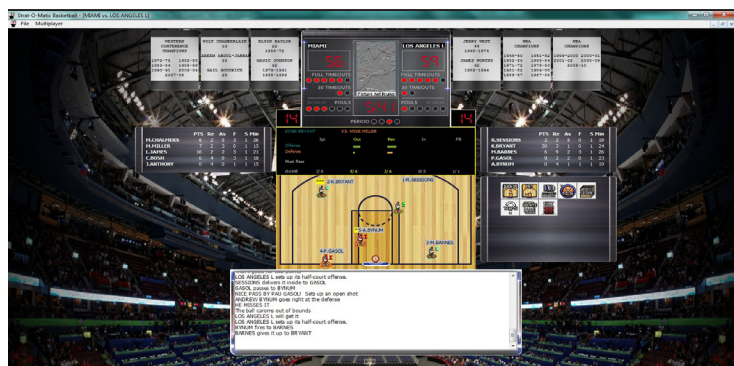
Roll two dice, add them and then adjust the yards in Rodgers' parentheses accordingly.

YARDS AFTER CATCH CHART

	Receiver's YAC Rating				
ROLL	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
2	LG	LG	23	21	15
3	20	14	13	11	10
4	14	11	10	8	6
5	11	10	7	2	0
6	0	0	0	0	0
7	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
8	6	2	0	0	-1
9	10	8	6	4	2
10	17	12	11	9	8
11	22	16	13	12	11
12	LG	24	20	16	12

Shooting for Three: 2014-15 NBA, Classic NBA and ABA

It's Strat-O-Matic on the fast break, lighting up the scoreboards with two more classic seasons and an instant classic: The 2014-15 NBA Finals with overtime thrillers and Golden State's first NBA title in 40 years.

The NBA set attendance records in 2014-15, thrilling millions with a shift in power that created hoop-crazy fans in cities that, at last, overtook the traditional NBA powers in Boston, Los Angeles, New York and Philadelphia.

Atlanta (60 wins) and Houston (56) each won their divisions for the first time in 21 years. Portland (51 wins) topped its division for the first time in 16 years.

But the biggest stories were in the cities that hosted the NBA Finals. Golden State, which hadn't won the NBA title since 1975, nor even a division since the following year, won 67 games (only four teams ever won more) with MVP Stephen Curry and a deep supporting cast, then went 16-5 in the playoffs to become champions again.

Their Finals foe was Cleveland, which celebrated the return of prodigal son LeBron James, who had prospered in Miami while the Cavaliers suffered through four miserable seasons without him. This time, King James led the Cavs to 53 wins, a division crown and nearly its first NBA championship.

Relive the Drama

With fellow stars Kevin Love and Kyrie Irving injured and out of the Finals, James averaged 30 points per game and posted a pair of triple doubles. Adding to the drama, this was the first NBA Finals to go overtime in the first two games. These Finals are ripe for a "What-If" replay with Strat-O-Matic.

In the regular season, Curry (23.8 ppg, 7.7 apg and an NBA record for 3-pointers) and James (25.3 ppg, 6 rpg, 7.4 apg) joined Houston's James Harden (27.2 ppg, 7.5 apg) and Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook (the league's leading scorer, 28.1 ppg, 8.6 apg) in a cluster of MVP-worthy players.

Star Power

New Orleans reached the playoffs for the first time in four years thanks to All-NBA player Anthony Davis, who averaged 24.4 ppg, led the NBA with 200 blocks and was No. 1 in Player Efficiency Rating (30.8).

The LA Clippers won 56 games with its dynamic duo, Blake Griffin (25.5 ppg, 12.7 rpg) and Chris Paul (22.1 ppg, NBA-best 10.2 apg), plus league rebounding champ DeAndre Jordan, who shot a super-human 71 percent from the floor.

Dwight Howard (16.4 ppg, 58% shooting, 14 rpg) teamed with Harden in Houston.

LaMarcus Aldridge (23.4 pg, 10.2 rpg) and Damian Lillard (21 ppg, 6.2 apg) elevated Portland.

Ascending Memphis won 55 games with Marc Gasol (17.8 ppg, 7.8 rpg), PF Zach Randolph (16.1 ppg, 10.1 rpg), PG Mike Conley (15.8 ppg) and SF Jeff Green (15 ppg).

For Atlantic Division winner Toronto, nine players averaged 10 or more points per 36 minutes.

Even in Minnesota, which won a mere 16 games, Rookie of the Year Andrew Wiggins helped make this a season to remember – and to replay on your tabletop.

Russell, Celts Rule Again

1965-66 NBA

Wilt Chamberlain and the Philadelphia 76ers came ever closer to unseating the Boston Celtics, but the Celtics won the last of their eight straight NBA championships with Bill Russell still at his rebounding (22.8 rpg) and shot-blocking best.

Philly won its final eight games (Boston won its final six) to give the Sixers a 55-25 record and the Eastern Division title by one game over the Celtics, who had won the division every year since Russell's arrival in 1956.

Chamberlain led the league in scoring (33.5 ppg) and rebounding (24.6 rpg). He had help from Hal Greer (22.7 ppg), Chet Walker and rookie Billy Cunningham, while Russell relied on teammates Sam Jones (23.2 ppg) and John Havlicek (18.8 ppg).

Thirteen legendary players averaged a double-double this season: Chamberlain, Russell, Oscar Robertson (31.3 ppg, 11.1 apg), Jerry Lucas (21.5 ppg and 21.1 rpg); Walt Bellamy (23.2 ppg, 16 rpg), Willis Reed, rookie Rick Barry (25.7 ppg,), Nate Thurmond; Gus Johnson, Dave DeBusschere, Ray Scott, Zelmo Beatty and Bill Bridges.

Jerry West (31.3 ppg) led the Los Angeles Lakers (45-35) to the Western Division title.

ABA, Hawk Take Flight

1967-68 ABA

The inaugural season of the American Basketball Association completes the set of ABA seasons re-created by Strat-O-Matic. The high-scoring league (all 11 teams averaged at least 103 points) with the three-point-shot and the red-white-and-blue ball had 10 regulars who averaged more than 20 points per game.

No star shined brighter than Pittsburgh's Connie Hawkins, who had been banned by the NBA but led the new league in scoring (26.8 ppg), was second in rebounding (13.5 rpg) and third in assists (4.6 apg). Hawkins, guard Charlie Williams (20.8 ppg), former Duke star Art Heyman (20.1 ppg after being acquired in a mid-season trade) and NBA castoff Chico Vaughn (19.9 ppg) led the Pipers to the ABA's best record (54-24) and the first ABA championship.

Other big names: the Indiana Pacers' Roger Brown, Freddie Lewis, Jimmy Rayl and Oliver Darden; the Denver Rockets' Byron Beck; the Kentucky Colonels' Louie Dampier; the Dallas Chaparrals' Cliff Hagan and Bob Verga; the Oakland Oaks' Levern Tart; the Minnesota Muskies' Mel Daniels, and the New Orleans Buccaneers' Doug Moe and Larry Brown.

Only 2014-15 available as cards; all available for Windows

SOM Hat Trick: 2014-15 plus 2 Classic Years

Hawk Dynasty: Chicago Caps Closest NHL Season Ever with 3rd Cup in Six Seasons

Now, after one of the National Hockey League's most thrilling seasons, you can coach almost any team to the Stanley Cup.

In 2014-15, for only the second time since the 1980s, an NHL team won its third Stanley Cup in a six-season span. This time, Chicago's dynasty was established without even winning its division in the closest, most dynamic NHL season ever.

And it came after a playoff season that was just as tense: For the first time in 15 years, both conference finals went seven games. Then, for only the second time in NHL history, the Stanley Cup Finals started with five one-goal games.

Neither Los Angeles, last year's Stanley Cup winner, nor Boston, last year's President's Cup winner, made the playoffs. It took 98 points to qualify in the East (Boston had 96) and 97 to qualify in the West (LA had 95). The 16 playoff teams were separated by only 16 points – the narrowest spread ever. The playoffs excluded five teams with at least 40 wins. Only four teams failed to get points in at least half their regular-season games.

The Puck Stops Here

Keeping things close were 34 sensational goalies who had save percentages of .910 or better, topped by Vezina Troiphy winner Carey Price (.933) of Montreal and 15 others at .920 or better.

Marc-Andre Fleury of Pittsburgh had 10 shutouts, while Price and Washington's Braden Holtby had nine each. Vezina finalist Pekka Rinne had 41 wins and a .923 save percentage for Nashville.

Mid-season goalie changes made Ottawa and Minnesota the hottest teams entering the post-season. Ottawa roared into the playoffs with a 23-4-4 record down the stretch. The surge coincided with the promotion of "The Hamburglar," rookie goalie Andrew Hammond, who was an astonishing 20-1-2 with a 1.79 GAA and .941 save percentage.

After Minnesota traded for Vezina finalist Devan Dubnynk, the Wild accumulated 59 points in the final 40 games, the NHL's best mark for the last half of the season, and elevated from 12th in the West into the playoffs. Dubynyk was second in the league with a 2.07 GAA and a .929 save percentage.
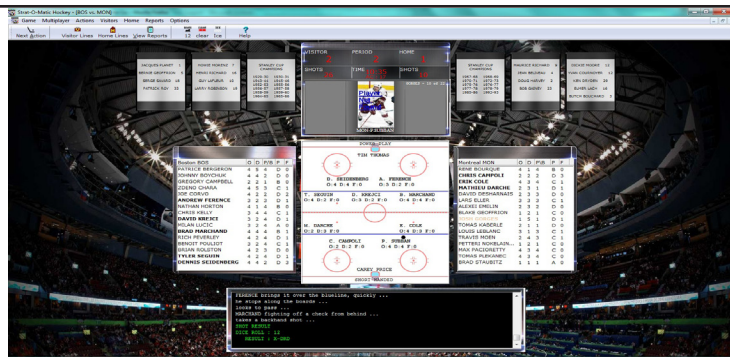
Firepower

But the NHL always has its shooting stars. Washington's Alex Ovechkin dominated with 53 goals, 25 on the power play. Steven Stamkos, the top gun on Tampa Bay, a Stanley Cup finalist and the highest-scoring team in the league, had 43. Rick Nash had 42 for the President's Trophy-winning Rangers and 12 others scored at least 31.

Dallas' Jamie Benn won the scoring title with a three-point game on the final day of the season. He finished one point ahead of the Islanders' John Tavares and three ahead of Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby. But Benn's 35 goals were second on his own team, to Tyler Seguin's 37.

Florida defenseman Aaron Ekblad won the Calder Trophy, beating the top rookie scorers, Ottawa's Mark Stone (26-38-64) and Calgary's Johnny Gaudreau (24-40-64).

Nicklas Backstrom of Washington led with 60 assists.

1952-53 NHL

It's your call with Strat-O-Matic: Can you coach highly favored Detroit to the Stanley Cup that it failed to capture? Or would you take one of the four other teams that were nearly equal for the regular season?

For the fifth consecutive season (in a run of seven straight), Detroit won the regular season, dominating with 90 points in the 70-game season. But second-place Montreal (75 points), though only eight points better than fifth-place Toronto, won the Stanley Cup.

Detroit's Gordie Howe led the NHL with 49 goals, 46 assists and 95 points and won his second consecutive MVP award. Linemate Ted Lindsay (32 goals, 71 points) was a distant second in league scoring, while Red Wings Alex Delvecchio, Metro Prystai and 19-goal defenseman Red Kelly also were among the top eight. Goalie Terry Sawchuk won his second straight Vezina Trophy, leading the league with 32 wins and a 1.90 goals-against average.

Montreal's Maurice Richard netted 28 goals and became the NHL's all-time leading goal scorer. New York's Wally Hargesheimer had 30 goals and Boston's Fleming Mackell had 27.

Chicago made the playoffs for the first time since 1946. Though the Rangers finished last, goalie Lorne Worsley was the league's top rookie in a stellar freshman group that included New York's Andy Bathgate, Dean Prentice and Harry Howell.

1983-84 NHL

What a season! On the way to an NHL-record-tying fifth straight Stanley Cup, the New York Islanders lost a five-game final to Edmonton, which began its own dynasty (four Cups in five seasons, five Cups in seven).

The Oilers dominated with 57 wins, 119 points and 446 goals (setting the NHL record for the third straight season). Wayne Gretzky (87 goals, 205 points) won his fourth straight scoring title and fifth straight MVP. With Jarri Kurri (52) and Glenn Anderson (54), Edmonton became the first team with three 50-goal scorers. Defenseman Paul Coffey invoked memories of Bobby Orr with 40 goals, 86 assists and 126 points to finish second to Gretzky in scoring.

Mike Bossy (51 goals, 118 points) and Bryan Trottier (40 goals, 111 points) again led the Islanders.

Buffalo's 18-year-old rookie Tom Barrasso won the Vezina Trophy. The Sabres' 103 points were just one short of Boston in a dramatic Adams Division race that included 94-point Quebec, with the league's No. 3-4 scorers, Michel Goulet (56 goals, 121 points) and Peter Stastny (46 goals, 119 points).

The other team in the card set of six, Washington, had Norris Trophy winner Rod Langway and Selke winner Doug Jarvis, and set a franchise record with 101 points.

As always, card purchasers get a print option for the remaining teams and Windows-gamer buyers get all the teams.

Get in the Game: Play Ball Online

Now may be the best time yet to become part of the hottest trend in Strat-O-Matic play: Strat-O-Matic Baseball Online.

The online draft leagues never have been more popular, following a variety of improvements that debuted last year. More people are playing Strat-O-Matic this way than ever.

There are numerous player pools to draft from, representing single seasons, decades and the widly popular All-Time Greats.

New players are added to the All-Time Greats set every few months. Gamers can vote on which players to add next in the Strat-O-Matic Baseball Online Discussion Forum.

These new players add excitement to 2014's game changer, Live Draft, a real-time draft option to the time-honored system of filling out a complete draft-preference card.

In the highly interactive Live Draft, gamers can view any player's card easily, use search and filter options to find just the right pick, use a position-count grid to track what positions are becoming scarce of top talent, track each league team's roster and even trash talk with other Live Draft participants.

How it Works

You play Strat-O-Matic Baseball Online through the game company's website. You play in a 6, 12 or 24-team league that can be friends you choose or random opponents. Your league decides on the amount of its salary cap (or no salary cap). Then draft 25 players from your chosen player pool of hundreds, or thousands of players.

You manage your team by building lineups, setting pitching rotations and choosing offensive and defensive strategy options. Then each morning you get a report on the progress of your 162-game season. That includes game recaps, boxscores, play-by-play accounts and fully updated stats in 60 categories.

You customize your experience in all these ways and by choosing from various player pools: Ones based on 2014, 1999 or 1986; ones based on the Superstar Sixties, The '70s Game, Back to the '80s and Back to the '90s; or the All-Time Greats. The game company and the online community will warn you: This is an addictive way to play. But you'll have a large and active group of gamers to share it with.

Free, Online Draft now in all of SOM's Windows Games

Strat-O-Matic's free online draft feature, a big hit in its debut this year in the Windows baseball game, will be added to the 2015 versions of SOM's football, hockey and basketball games.

Draft leagues can choose a traditional, linear draft or a serpentine draft order. They may choose a draft with no time limit between picks or set intervals of 30, 45, 60, 90, 120 or 150 seconds. Managers can watch the draft live online, and live-chat their comments. Or, if a manager is summoned away, he can assign a preference list for the computer to choose for him. In the case of a tardy league member, the draft can still keep moving: Either the computer will pick the best player available (in a timed draft), or the league commissioner can make the pick for the absent coach.

Online draft is easy to use. The commish creates or updates the league, places the eligible players in the free-agent pool, then uploads the file to the SOM server (where the draft is conducted) and launches the Online Draft mode. Each draft participant uses his Strat-O-Matic website sign-in and password. Draft picks are viewed by league members live, in real time. When the draft is complete, the commish downloads the draft file and uses an import function to all the drafted players on their correct teams.

Draft participants will be able to see the entire list of drafted players and undrafted players. When evaluating a potential pick, the draft screen will display each player's name, his position, some of his Strat-O-Matic ratings and his actual stats.

Latest Baseball HOF Card Set Nearly Sold Out

Like the sold-out 2010 and 75th Anniversary Hall of Fame baseball card sets before it, Strat-O-Matic's 2014 version soon will be gone.

Though this set does not include the 2015 inductees, the Hall of Fame Induction Weekend is fast approaching, and demand for SOM's Hall of Fame sets always goes up then. So act now to get the 2014 set to avoid disappointment.

This set includes 246 players, from the initial inductees — Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, Babe Ruth and Honus Wagner — through the 2014 class of Tom Glavine, Greg Maddux and Frank Thomas, based on an average of their seven best seasons, and includes the Negro League stars elected to the Hall of Fame.

School Discounts: Make Learning Fun with SOM

Your classroom or youth group can build relationships by playing Strat with deeply discounted games.

The Strat-O-Matic After School Program offers your choice of Baseball Selector Sets (game with five teams of your choice) at 50 percent off or the Baseball Express game (ideal for younger kids) at 40 percent off.

Selector sets are $10 each for a minimum of six games. Baseball Express is $6 each for a minimum of 10 games.

The program is for schools and such youth groups as those affiliated with YMCAs, Jewish Community Centers, churches, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts.

For orders/questions, email:
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