

STRAT-O-MATIC® NEWS

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Winter 2017

Cubs WIN! ... and Other Reasons to Relive the 2016 Baseball Season

The 2016 Major League season has a one-line resume to secure its place in baseball history: Cubs Win!

That the lovable losers did so for the first time in 108 years and did so in an extra-inning Game 7 after falling behind three games to one against Cleveland – the AL team that had gone the longest without a World Series title – makes the story line that much sweeter and the what-if replays with Strat-O-Matic all the more irresistible.

But like a spirited girlfriend who will drive you crazy in every way imaginable, the 2016 season was weird and wonderful, making it *the* must-have season for any gamer.

2016 was wonderful: Half the teams were in playoff contention with just four days left in the season. Players hit the second-most home runs in history.

It was sunset for Vin Scully, David Ortiz, Mark Teixeira, Alex Rodriguez, Prince Fielder, A.J. Pierzynski and, tragically, Jose Fernandez, but also sunrise for an exceptionally bright rookie class including position players Corey Seager, Gary Sanchez, Trea Turner, Dansby Swanson, Trevor Story, Ryon Healy, Tim Anderson, David Dahl, Tyler Naquin and Nomar Mazara.

Promising talents such as Andrew Benintendi and Alex Bregman debuted late in the season.

On the mound, rookies Michael Fulmer, Kenta Maeda, Alex Reyes and Colorado fireballer Jon Gray sizzled.

Rookie closers Edwin Diaz in Seattle and Seung-hwan Oh in St. Louis helped make this the Year of the Reliever with a record 15,894 innings pitched, enough to supply whole seasons for 11 teams. Baltimore's Zach Britton was 47-for-47 in saves with a 0.54 ERA. Mark Melancon saved 47 with a 1.64 ERA. Kenley Jansen had 47 saves, a 1.83 ERA, a .150 batting average against and struck out 13.6 men per 9 innings. Aroldis Chapman threw 538 pitches of at least 100 mph, fanning 14 per 9 with a 1.55 ERA. Dellin Betances struck out 15.5 men per 9.

2016 was weird: Melancon and Chapman were traded in mid-season. So were three of the seven men who hit 40-plus homers. In a two-week span, 27 teams made 35 trades involving 93 players.

The Cardinals finished 17 games behind first place and still almost reached the post-season. Strikeouts and defensive shifts

Pre-orders begin: Jan. 31
Opening Day at SOM: Feb. 10

Pre-orders for Opening Day pickup will begin the same day as all other pre-orders. However, those coming for Opening Day pickup don't have to rush to be among the first to call.



Strat-O-Matic Journeys into the App Universe

- **Card Viewer**
- **Baseball 365**
- **Basic Baseball**

Helping gamers play in more places and on more devices, Strat-O-Matic is going mobile with three new baseball apps,

First up: An already-launched free app that lets you draft and set up your teams for Baseball 365 leagues. Anything you can do for Baseball 365 on the PC you can do with your app, but now you can take it with you for instant gratification.

In the works: The Card Viewer App, which offers player card images of every player for every season of Major League baseball history.

Earlybirds at SOM headquarters on Opening Day (Feb. 10)

can test the card viewer before product delivery begins at noon.

That setup will take place in a new Strat-O-Matic studio that will be used for YouTube and other video content in 2017. Check out [this video](#) introducing the studio.

When downloaded from the App Store, the Card Viewer will be free with access to every card made in the careers of the 117 stars in the original Baseball Heroes set.

For \$4.99/month or \$49.99/year, fans will have access to every Major League season – a bountiful treasure that gamers can use in many ways for endless fun. Players can be found in searches by name, by team or by season. A search for the

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New Strategy Option: Can You Beat the Shift?

As the Major Leagues' use of the defensive shift has multiplied each year in recent seasons, Strat-O-Matic gamers have inquired how they might adopt the strategy. The game company has the answer – an easy-to-use rule that will simulate the way the shift reduces batting average against pull-hitters, but backfires against others.

The Super Advanced Shift Rule is optional. Here is how it works:

- The defense may call for a defensive shift any time that the bases are empty and the batter is rated Power N.

- If the shift is employed, the offense chooses either to “Swing Away” or tries to “Beat the Shift.”

- Then roll a 20-sided die along with the other 3 dice. If a 1 or 2 occurs on the 20-sided die then consult the chart below, using the single white die from the initial roll for the play outcome (you do not refer to the player cards in this case):

- If a 3 through 20 occurs on the 20-sided die then use the other three dice to determine the play result by reading it from the card as you normally would, with the following exception:

If the offense has called “Beat the Shift” and the play result is a homerun and the initial 20-sided die roll was a 3 through 8 then the play result may be over-ridden. Since the offense has tried to beat the shift by hitting to the opposite side of the field, the batter’s power has been diminished. So if a homerun occurs in this circumstance then roll a single die to determine the play result:

die	result
1	Homerun
2	Homerun
3	Homerun
4	Double
5	Double
6	Double

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- While shifting you may not also bring the corners or infield in, or guard the lines.

- “Beat the Shift” can be used only in lieu of swinging away – it may not be combined with other strategies like bunting for a hit.

- Resolve GB() X results as usual, whether or not the shift is being used.

- This rule is designed to mimic a Full Ted Williams shift. In real life, some shifts occur with men on base, but SOM does not allow for that because usually they are not full Ted Williams-type shifts.

- For maximum realism, SOM recommends that you highly curtail the use of this rule when playing with pre-2010 seasons, when shifts were used sparingly.

- In the Windows game this rule can be turned on and off using the Max Rules settings.

	Left-Handed Batter		Right-Handed Batter	
	Swing Away	Beat Shift	Swing Away	Beat Shift
1	HR(rf)1-8, Do 9-20	DOUBLE (lf)	HR(lf)1-8, Do 9-20	DOUBLE (rf)
2	gb (2b) B	SINGLE (lf)	gb (2b) B	SINGLE (rf)
3	gb (2b) B	SINGLE (lf)	gb (2b) B	SINGLE (rf)
4	gb (ss) B	gb(3b) B	gb (ss) B	gb (1b) B
5	gb (ss) B	gb (3b) B	gb (ss) B	gb (1b) B
6	gb (1b) B	gb (3b) B	gb (3b) B	gb (1b) B

Win More Games with The Baseball Ratings Book

Every game and every season of Strat-O-Matic Baseball is won and lost because of a series of decisions, large and small. Who should be your starting pitcher in this hitter-friendly park? Who should pinch-hit against left-handers? Who should bat third in the lineup? Sixth? Does this trade do enough to help me? Even at the end of the season, the questions never end and decisions must be made on the best information available.

Strat-O-Matic’s Baseball Ratings Book is the best information you can find. It is the only guide with the official data from Strat-O-Matic. The only guide with all the carded and computer-only players. No other source provides as many ratings.

Experienced gamers talk about “chances” of getting on base, hitting a homer or other results. These charts give you that informa-

tion at a glance, saving you hours of number-crunching. It’s the detail you need to decide who should play, who to draft or trade, and what strategy to use.

When you roll three dice, there are 216 possible combinations, 108 on the pitcher’s card and 108 on the hitter’s card. Each column has 36 chances. You might look at the 2-12 listed results on a card and ask, “How can that be when each column only shows 11 results?” The answer, of course, is that the 2-12 rolls do not have equal value. The only way to get a 2 result is by rolling snake-eyes, so a homer on the 2 roll has only one chance in 216 of happening. A homer on the 7 roll has six chances in 216 of happening. Counting chances is further complicated when you consider lefty-righty combinations and split chances.

The charts from a past season below show how the Ratings Book does the number-crunching for you. If you have a runner on first and you want to know the chances of a double play, you see that Grace has 22 chances of a double play against a lefty pitcher, and Orosco has 4 double-play chances against a left-handed batter. Add them and you get 26 out of 216 chances for a double play in that situation. Do you stick with Grace? With the Ratings Guide, you can make an informed decision.

The charts even show such ratings as ballpark homerun chances (BP), clutch, hold and endurance, as well as complete fielding data for all of each player’s rated positions.

Since the Ratings Book is published weeks before the cards and computer rosters come out, you can best be prepared by ordering the 2016 season book now.

CHICAGO-N		VS. LEFTHANDERS										VS. RIFTHANDERS																	
HITTERS	AB	SO	BB	HIT	OB	TB	HR	BP	CL	DP	SO	BB	HIT	OB	TB	HR	BP	CL	DP	STEALING	STL	SPD	B	H	FIELDING				
Grace,M*	547	0	8	31.2	39.2	39.5	1.4	w	+1	22	0	11	36.7	47.7	49.8	0.9	1	+1	20	4/11 (13-4)	E	11	D	B	1b-1e5				
PITCHERS	VS. LEFTHANDERS										VS. RIFTHANDERS										ENDURANCE								
BALT	IP	SO	BB	HIT	OB	TB	HR	BP	DP	SO	BB	HIT	OB	TB	HR	BP	DP			HO	BK	WP	F	BAT/BUNT	ST	SP			
Orosco,J*	56	28	20	7.2	27.2	16.0	1.6	2	4	34	8	5.3	13.3	7.7	0.8	1	5	+3	R(1)	-5	0	7	2-15	1WR-C	E	10			

Much to Shout About in Strat-O-Matic Baseball 2017

A carnival barker would be on the top of his game touting the can't-wait-for-it new features of the soon-to-be-released Strat-O-Matic Baseball 2017 for Windows.

Daily draft-league play! Draft-league option for Baseball Daily!

Defensive shifts! New rule adds realism!

New computer-manager settings! Pitch count limits! Clutch pinch-hitting!

Catcher plate-blocking now optional!

Pitcher game scores! Can anyone top Kerry Wood's 105?

Manual-entry advancement! Fielding stats!

Convenience! Faster settings for roster installs, sound options, creating bug files!

NetPlay fix this year!

The game to have for a dozen new Strat-O-Matic Baseball player sets!

Play pro baseball just the way you like it! Step right up!

One of the most compelling attractions of the Strat-O-Matic Baseball Windows game is the ability to customize play exactly to your liking, with countless ways to combine seasons, teams, players, playing modes, strategy settings and statistical reports. That never has been truer than with Strat-O-Matic Baseball 2017.

Expected to be released in February, Strat-O-Matic Baseball 2017 will be the

Official Word from Strat-O-Matic: Netplay Problems to be Solved this Year

Here is the official announcement about Netplay from Strat-O-Matic to all Windows game customers:

Netplay is the game component which enables you to play our games over the Internet. Since the introduction of the Windows 10 Operating System there has been a large uptick in the number of problems reported with Netplay. We know that many of our leagues rely on this feature and it is essential to produce a solution to these problems. We have heard your concerns and we have been actively working on a fix.

Considerable amounts of time and money have already been invested into finding an acceptable solution to this issue, but progress has been slow, which is quite frustrating. As such, no upgrade to Netplay will be included as a new feature when the Strat-O-Matic Baseball 2017 Windows Game is launched in February, but we have taken the next step to completely overhaul this system.

Our main goal is to fix the current is-

necessary version to enjoy computer play with these 12 new player sets: 2016 Major Leagues, 2017 Baseball Daily, Baseball Heroes II, 1949 (Deluxe Super-Advanced), Hall of Fame 2017, 2016 Career Historical, 1872 National Association, 1914 Negro League, 1924 Negro League, 1944 Negro League, 1961 Japanese Baseball and 2016 Japanese Baseball.

The ability to replay the historic and thrilling Cubs-Indians seven-game World Series will be attraction enough for many. The much-requested new Baseball Heroes II set of 117 players will be another.

But the newest Windows game also will offer strategy and convenience.

Managerial strategy advances include the option shift your infield to cut down the batting average of power-hitting pull-hitters – and the option of the batter to try to beat the shift by hitting the other way. Your Computer Manager will be able to dictate pitcher endurance by pitch counts and/or designate batters to be pinch-hit for in clutch-hitting situations when the game is late and close.

The catcher-blocking-the-plate rule has been a standard feature of Super Advanced play since the rule was introduced. Now it can be toggled on or off as a Max Rule.

For convenience, it will now be easier to search for the season rosters you want to install. A single click will select “All” or “None” sound options. A menu will create debug files easily.

sues and remove the need to port-forward your router to streamline the connectivity process and to make playing online more intuitive. As such, we have partnered with a much larger programming organization to complete this task. Once an update is available, it will be posted on our website as a free Netplay Upgrade Patch so your leagues can continue to thrive and compete.

This will happen as soon as possible this year. We will keep the community updated as work progresses.

It is very important that when we launch the replacement version of Netplay that it is rock solid. If you would like to help us accomplish that goal please sign up to be a Netplay tester by emailing techsupport@strat-o-matic.com and request to be added to the Netplay Test Team.

Thank you for your continued patience and we apologize for the confusion and frustration.



Now Playing: Drafted Teams in Baseball Daily for Windows Game

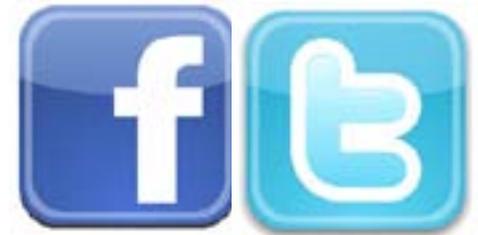
For those waiting to yield to the temptation of having a new, current-season player set every day, the new draft-league option for Baseball Daily may be the real headliner of the Strat-O-Matic Baseball 2017 release.

When Strat-O-Matic's groundbreaking innovation debuted last year, Baseball Daily could be played only with stock teams in the Windows game. Now you will have the choice to play the current-season players as you drafted them.

When you play Baseball Daily, you get a new electronic card set every morning! Each player who had stats from the previous day has a newly adjusted card.

The Baseball Daily cards begin with each player's historical performance, adjusted daily by the current-season stats until, deeper in the season, the current performance dictates most of his card.

Experience the season-long streaks and slumps they encounter in the 2017 Major League season. And experience the decisions every big-league manager faces: Do you go with the hot bat, or the more reliable veteran?



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Follow us on Twitter (@StratOMatic)

Get Your Daily Dose with Baseball 365

There are more ways than ever to enjoy Strat-O-Matic's ultra-popular online baseball draft game. Play via PC or the new mobile app. Draft from player pools from single seasons, decades or all-time greats. Play historic seasons (e.g. 1982), the 2016 season or with the current players, updated daily in the return of the acclaimed Baseball Daily, which debuted last year.

However you roll (electronically in this case), you'll draft 25 players under a salary cap, plus a ballpark, then set your lineups, pitching rotations and other computer-manager instructions, then wait for it (if you can stand the wait) – each morning you'll get the results of your team's latest three-game series, complete with recaps, boxscores and more.

For max fun, join the chat rooms and find out why so many gamers play Baseball 365 year-'round, with season after season of attempts to win pennants and glory. Newcomers get free trials and significant discounts, too.

Long-Time Strat-O Gamer Fell in Love Again, This Time with Baseball Daily

Kevin Hennessy of St. Paul, MN began playing Strat-O-Matic Baseball more than 50 years ago. But last year he began playing in a way that has him thirsting for more in 2017. Let him tell the story:

I want to say how much I have enjoyed playing Strat's new Baseball Daily over the past few months. I was reluctant to try it but jumped on the mid-season half-price offer. After this extended trial I'm ready to explain why I am finding it so much fun.

First, I am an old-time Strat baseball player, starting in 1965 with the 1964 season cards at age 10. My father made the comment early-on in our SOM-playing careers how it would be interesting to play with the "current" rosters as the season progressed.

This set me on a path of making player trades and using nameless player cards for rookies. This proved to be a bit of a moving target, having to switch nameless cards for rookies who started hot but faded and when traded players fell short in real life of what their teams hoped for (Jimmie Hall, 1968). For the regular cards, there was no way to match a breakout season (Carl Yastrzemski, 1967)

With Baseball Daily, and the daily updating of the cards,

a player reflects this game-to-game change in the current day of the schedule, however gradual that might be. In my estimation this one-ups the games I have played using projections – which are static and never reflect a truly poor (collapse) or great (breakout) year.

I have been replaying the Minnesota Twins and letting the computer play all other teams. At times I have used the computer to catch me up in the schedule also. I am now in September and am interested in how certain players will finish out the replay as their cards get better, in particular the Twins' Brian Dozier and Byron Buxton.

I have 100 percent confidence in the Strat game engine's ability to generate realistic results. Combine that with the dynamic nature of the day-to-day player cards, and the season in progress on the "gaming screen" takes on a life of its own. And let me emphasize: I absolutely love and would never want to lose the ability to look at the cards during the game and between games!

This is the closest experience I've had to simulating real baseball. I hope Strat continues Baseball Daily next year and may even be considering something similar for other games (NBA first, please?).

Strat-O-Matic 365

Set Your Default Lineup vs. Right-Handed Starting Pitchers

Tap a lineup slot to choose a starter and up to 2 backups for that position. Tap the arrows on the right of a player to bring up a control bar with buttons to move him up or down.

Position	Player	Backups
LF	Robinson, F. (R)	1 backup
2B	Hornby, R. (R)	
CF	Wilson, K. (R)	
DH	Greenberg, H. (R)	1 backup
1B	McGwire, M. (R)	1 backup
RF	Aaron, H. (R)	
3B	Rosen, A. (R)	
SS	Banks, E. (R)	
C	Hartnett, G. (R)	1 backup

SAVE YOUR LINEUP

Strat-O-Matic 365

Front Office

Danville Dashers

Hal Newhouser (FAS) whiffs 13, beats Zombies, 9-4
Sandy Koufax (SLU) K's 13, beats Pot Pies, 5-1
Gobby Hartnett blasts 3 HRs in 10-6 victory over Bulldogs

Previous Games

Game 115

Team	R	H	E
Dashers	11	17	0
Comardubs	10	8	0

Ben Zobrist hits 2 HRs in 11-10 loss to Dashers

W: Rosen, A. (2-2)
L: Hoffman, T. (4-7)
S: McCune, B. (3)

HR: A. Simmons (9th), G. Bretz (3rd), W. McCovey (3HR), G. Charlesson (2HR), R. Smith (4th), B. Zobrist (2HR)

Game 116

Team	R	H	E
Dashers	8	8	1
Comardubs	11	9	1

Greater Totten Comardubs beat Danville Dashers 11-8

W: Hartnett, G. (5-8)

This is how Baseball 365 screens will display on your mobile phone

Strat-O in the App Universe

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1975 Royals, for instance, will provide a list of all the players rated for that team. Just click on the player(s) you want to view.

For another 99 cents/month or \$9.99/year, fans can expand the Card Viewer offerings to all of SOM's specialty baseball sets – Hall of Fame, Heroes, Negro League Stars, Cuban Stars, individual Negro League seasons, Japanese seasons and Baseball Daily 2017 – the card set that changes every day of the 2017 season.

2016 Does Not Have to End

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were at all-time highs, but batting averages and run-scoring went up anyway.

Second basemen hit more HR than left fielders. Outfielder Kris Davis would be compared to Reggie Jackson and Jose Canseco. Second baseman Brian Dozier would be compared to Rogers Hornsby and Ryne Sandberg.

The third app is free. It helps fans play Strat-O-Matic's basic baseball game (basic only) on the go. The "helper" program will handle the dice rolls, the basic game charts and provide a line score. You supply the cards and the strategy. Just pack your phone and a pocketful of cards and you are ready to play. Have fun, will travel.

Not ready to app? No worries. Strat-O-Matic is there for you with its No. 1 board game, its top-selling Windows game and its versatile online Baseball 365.

Bad teams usually use the most players, but the NL-West champ Dodgers used 55, including 31 pitchers and 15 different starting pitchers. Yet no team won more games (39) in which their starting pitchers lasted no more than five innings.

Injuries limited Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw to 21 starts, but he will have the most dominant starting pitching card of all.

Nobody Does Classic Baseball Better than Strat-O-Matic

Proof: 1949, Heroes II set and a Heroes I reprint; HOF, Career Historical updates for Windows

The hits just keep on coming from Strat-O-Matic and a multi-hit day is on the way:

- The classic re-creation of the 1949 Major Leagues, a season with two pennant races decided on the final day.

- Baseball Heroes II – 117 more stars in the sequel to the wildly popular Baseball Heroes set released in 2010.

- A limited reprint of Heroes I, answering the pleas of those who missed out in 2010, but crave combining the two Heroes sets with other specialty sets.

- An updated Hall of Fame roster for Windows, adding new inductees Jeff Bagwell, Tim Lincecum and Ivan Rodriguez in what is now a 255-player collection.

- The updated Career Historical disk for Windows, with all of the 15,000 or so players ever to play in the big leagues.

- Six new Chevy-style computer rosters for Negro League, Japanese League and American Association seasons.

For many, the home run in this group will be Heroes II, with Derek Jeter, David Ortiz, Chipper Jones, Mariano Rivera, Jim Thome, Vladimir Guerrero, Ivan Rodriguez, Roy Halladay, Trevor Hoffman, and 109 other mega-stars and ultra-popular players.

They span a century of baseball, from shortstop Roger Peckinpugh, whose first big year was in 1916, to the 2016 retirees Ortiz, Mark Teixeira and Alex Rodriguez.

There's a cast of strong Hall of Fame candidates (Jeter, Jones, Guerrero, Thome, Rivera, Hoffman) and controversial ones (A-

Rod, Manny Ramirez).

Other recent superstars include Halladay, Roy Oswalt, Todd Helton, Scott Rolen, Gary Sheffield and Jorge Posada.

Like those above, almost half of the players in the set starred in the 1990s and later. But there are 14 who played before 1950, and 24 from the 1950s and '60s. For every Charlie Keller and Indian Bob Johnson there is a Johnny Callison and Rocky Colavito; for every Bucky Walters and Harry Brecheen, a Dean Chance and Camilo Pascual; for every Stan Hack, a Rico Petrocelli; for every Firpo Marberry, a Ron Perranoski.

Heroes II resurrects the memories of fireballing pitchers such as Sam McDowell, Jim Maloney and Billy Wagner, and finesse artists such as Cliff Lee, Johnny Antonelli and Stu Miller.

They are the instant legends (Fred Lynn, Fernando Valenzuela), the later bloomers (Jim Edmonds, Rick Reuschel) and the consistently good and underrated (Jose Cruz, Dave Stieb). They are huge fan favorites (Kirk Gibson, Torii Hunter) and the sometimes-bad boys (Jason Giambi, Darryl Strawberry). They are sluggers (Jack Clark, Carlos Delgado), slick glove men (Andruw Jones, Omar Vizquel) and many who were both (Dolph Camilli, Miguel Tejada).

Rated on their seven best seasons, these Heroes can play as four balanced teams, or in combination with the first Baseball Heroes, the Hall of Fame set and the Negro League Stars.

1949 had so much Drama

In the National League, the Dodgers and Cardinals were at it again, for the fourth straight year. In the end, Jackie Robinson's finest season (.342-16-124 with Major League-leading 37 SB with 122 runs, 66 extra-base hits and .528 slugging) proved worthy of a final-day pennant and MVP honors over Stan Musial (.338-36-123 with 128 runs, 90 extra-base hits and .624 slugging) and Enos Slaughter (.336-13-96). The Dodgers had Rookie of the Year pitcher Don Newcombe (17-8, 3.17) and the Cardinals had Howie Pollett (20-9, 2.77).

The Phillies, with youngsters Robin Roberts, Richie Ashburn, Del Ennis, Granny Hamner and Willie Jones, were an inspiring third. Warren Spahn, led the league in wins (21), complete games (25) and strikeouts (161), for the fourth-place Braves. The Giants had Bobby Thomson (.309-27-109) and ERA leader Dave Koslo (2.50). The Pirates' Ralph Kiner bashed a career-best 54 home runs while winning his fourth straight home run title, while also hitting .310 and leading the NL with 127 RBIs and .658 slugging.

The American League was every bit as exciting and dramatic.

Casey Stengel's first season as manager of the Yankees was the first of the Bronx Bombers' record five straight World Series champions, but it took wins on the final two days against Boston in Yankee Stadium to overtake the Red Sox by a single game.

It wasn't the only near miss for Boston. MVP Ted Williams (.343-43-159 with .650 slugging and 162 walks) missed a Triple Crown by losing the batting title by less than a single point to Detroit's George Kell. The Red Sox also had the league's top two winning pitchers, Mel Parnell (25, with the league-best 2.77 ERA) and Ellis Kinder (23).

It might have been a three-man race for the batting title if Joe DiMaggio (.346-14-67) had not missed the first half of the season with a foot injury.

With Bob Lemon's 22 wins and Dale Mitchell's 23 triples, third-place Cleveland finished only eight games behind New York. Detroit had Kell (.343), rookie Johnny Groth (.293) and four starting pitchers with at least 15 wins, led by AL strikeout leader Virgil Trucks (19-11, 2.81) and future Hall of Famer Hal Newhouser (18-11). The A's had 20-game winner Alex Kellner.

The '49 season also made household names of many impressive youngsters – Newcombe, Roberts, Ashburn, Yogi Berra, Duke Snider, Whitey Lockman, Del Crandall, AL Rookie of the Year Roy Sievers, Nellie Fox, and Eddie Yost.

Baseball Heroes II roster:

Catchers: Ed Bailey, Walker Cooper, Jason Kendall, Darrell Porter, Jorge Posada, Ivan Rodriguez, Manny Sanguillen, Jim Sundberg, Gene Tenace

Infielders: 1B - Dolph Camilli, Carlos Delgado, Jason Giambi, Todd Helton, John Olerud, David Ortiz, Mark Teixeira, Jim Thome; 2B - Max Bishop, Ray Durham, Chuck Knoblauch, Davey Lopes, Gil McDougald, Buddy Myer, Tony Phillips, Placido Polanco; 3B - Sal Bando, Ron Cey, Darrell Evans, Stan Hack, Chipper Jones, Bob Elliott, Scott Rolen, Robin Ventura, Matt Williams; SS - Bert Campaneris, Rafael Furcal, Nomar Garciaparra, Derek Jeter, Roger Peckinpugh, Rico Petrocelli, Alex Rodriguez, Miguel Tejada, Omar Vizquel

Outfielders: CF - Brett Butler, Johnny Damon, Willie Davis, Jim Edmonds, Torii Hunter, Andruw Jones, Chet Lemon, Fred Lynn, Reggie Smith; LF - Moises Alou, Brady Anderson, Lance Berkman, Jose Cruz, Luis Gonzalez, Bob Johnson, Charlie Keller, Manny Ramirez; RF - Bobby Abreu, Johnny Callison, Jack Clark, Rocky Colavito, Kirk Gibson, Brian Giles, Pedro Guerrero, Vladimir Guerrero, Gary Sheffield, Darryl Strawberry

Pitchers: SP - John Antonelli, Kevin Appier, Harry Brecheen, Dean Chance, Chuck Finley, Bob Friend, Roy Halladay, Tim Hudson, Larry Jackson, Cliff Lee, Mark Langston, Jim Maloney, Jon Matlack, Sam McDowell, Jamie Moyer, Bobo Newsom, Roy Oswalt, Camilo Pascual, Andy Pettitte, Brad Radke, Rick Reuschel, Jose Rijo, Kenny Rogers, Steve Rogers, Bret Saberhagen, Johan Santana, Dave Stieb, Mel Stottlemyre, Frank Tanana, Dizzy Trout, Fernando Valenzuela, Frank Viola, Bucky Walters, Wilbur Wood, Carlos Zambrano; RP - Turk Farrell, Keith Foulke, John Hiller, Trevor Hoffman, Firpo Marberry, Stu Miller, Jeff Montgomery, Ron Perranoski, Dave Righetti, Mariano Rivera, Billy Wagner

Roots of MLB in History, Geography

6 New Specialty Rosters Chart the Paths to Today's Major Leagues

Many roads have led to the Major Leagues and that has seldom been better illustrated than in the six specialty sets Strat-O-Matic is offering gamers this season.

All of the sets are for the Windows game only, in the "Chevy" style. All but the Japanese Leagues use pro-rated stats to reflect longer seasons than they played back then.

Negro Leagues

The 1914, 1924 and 1944 seasons available this time expand Strat-O-Matic's library of Negro Leagues seasons to 16. The 1924 season is the biggest set yet, with 14 teams that developed 20 future Hall of Fame players.

The champs and stars of these three seasons present a diverse group of the Negro Leagues' storied franchises and its most brilliant stars.

Hall of Fame pitcher Rube Foster also was the brilliant owner of the Chicago American Giants, the dominant team (89-61) in 1914. But the superstars in the six-team league that stretched from New York to Havana, Cuba were New York SP Smokey Joe Williams (26-10, 2.36) and Havana OF Cristobal Torriente (.345), both future Hall of Famers.

Some 21 players that year are featured in Strat-O-Matic's Negro League Stars set.

Torriente was still tearing up the league in 1924, with 45 doubles and a 1.002 OPS in a heavy-hitting season.

But look for Oscar Charleston, the so-called Black Ty Cobb, for eye-popping all-around play: .396, 46 doubles, 17 triples, 34 HR, 142 runs, 126 RBI, 1.198 OPS and 42 SB. Oh, he's a CF-1.

The players chasing Charleston in those categories were Hall

Roster	Champ	Roots	Notable
2016 Japan Leagues	Nippon Ham Fighters	At least 48 ex-MLB players	MLB watch: Shohei Otani
1961 Japan Leagues	Yomiuri Giants	Young Sadaharu Oh	Year of the Pitcher
1944 Negro League	Homestead Grays	11 HOFers	Campanella, Doby, Newcombe
1924 Negro League	Kansas City Monarchs	20 HOFers	Heavy hitting
1914 Negro League	Chicago American Giants	8 HOFers	6 teams including Havana
1872 Nat'l Association	Boston Red Stockings	6 HOFers	2nd NA season

of Famers, too: Jud Wilson, Turkey Stearnes and Torriente.

But it was the legendary Kansas City Monarchs (99-57) who were the class of the league with a lineup worthy of inclusion in the Negro League Stars set, especially Bullet Joe Rogan (.377), Heavy Johnson (.369) and Dobie Moore (.346).

Still, the Monarchs barely won the World Series, five games to four with one tie, over Philadelphia, which featured the likes of Biz Mackey (.353) and Louis Santop (.320).

By 1944, the Negro League did not yet realize it was nearing its end once the Major League integration began in 1947. Instead, the '44 season was developing such future MLB stars as Roy Campanella (league-leading 46 doubles), Larry Doby (the first black player in the American League), batting champ Sam Jethroe (.346) and pitchers Don Newcombe and Joe Black.

But the brighter Negro League stars played for the mighty Homestead Grays (91-63), long associated with all-time slugger Josh Gibson (34 HR, 108 RBI, 1.018 OPS). Future Hall of Fame pitcher Ray Brown (26-11, 2.88) also starred for Homestead.

These three seasons fit neatly into Strat-O-Matic's Negro League library, which now covers nearly half the seasons from 1908 through 1948.

Japanese Leagues

The 2016 version of Japanese baseball is the fourth straight current season Strat-O-Matic has offered. To some extent, they are previews of players Major League fans will see soon, while also resurrecting the careers of former Major Leaguers. In between, these rosters inform us of Japanese stars we might never know otherwise.

Japanese baseball nearly produced its version of the 2016 Cubs when the Hiroshima Carp reached the Nippon Series for the first time since 1961 and won the first two games, only to lose the next four to the champion Nippon Ham Fighters.

Hiroshima had Central League MVP Takahiro Arai (300-19-101) and home-field sellouts for every game while going 89-52, 17.5 games ahead of the legendary Yomiuri Giants.

But Nippon-Ham had Pacific League MVP Shohei Otani, a 6-4, 207-pound pitcher on every Major League team's radar. He was 10-4 with a 1.86 ERA and 174 strikeouts and threw the fastest pitch ever recorded in Japanese baseball, 102.5 mph. His .322 batting average was almost an after-thought.

Nippon-Ham also had a slice of lore-in-the-making going for it. Slugger Brandon Laird was eating at a restaurant and the

chef brought him sushi, saying it would bring him good luck – and Laird hit a home run the following day.

Laird's homerun trot now includes him mimicking making sushi, and even the third-base coach and the fans have become part of the sushi craze. Some fans bring stuffed sushi toys to the ballpark and a between-innings activity shows fans doing the sushi-making motion on the video board.

The routine seems to work—Laird led the Pacific League with 39 homeruns and he hit a grand slam in the six-run eighth inning that decided the final game of the Nippon Series.

The 1961 season is Strat-O-Matic's deepest dive yet into Japanese baseball history.

In a season with a .242 batting average, Central League MVP Shigeo Nagashima led the league in average (.353), hits (158), doubles (32), homeruns (28), and walks (88). With 21-year-old teammate Sadaharu Oh (.253-13-53) the Yomiuri Giants won the Nippon Series for the fifth time.

About that pitching: Nishitetsu's Kazuhisa Inao won a record-tying 42 games with a league-low 1.69 ERA. His 353 strikeouts rank second in Japanese history. Rookie-of-the-Year Horoshi Gondo of Chunichi won 35 games with a 1.70 ERA and 310 strikeouts in a record 429 IP.

National Association

SOM has almost completed its re-reception of the five-season forerunner to the National League, having now covered 1872-1875.

The '72 NA had three .400 hitters (Cap Anson, Ross Barnes, Davey Force), the Boston Red Stockings' first of four straight championships and the emergence of pitcher Candy Cummings, who won 30 games.

Cummings took advantage of a new rule permitting sidearm delivery. Henceforth, baseball history has credited him with developing the curve ball.