

**Re: This Week In Baseball**  
**Air Date: July 28, 2007**

**TWB #817**

This week TWIB looked back at the careers of the 2007 National Baseball Hall of Fame inductees – Tony Gwynn and Cal Ripken, Jr. Both Tony and Cal played decades for their respective teams. Now they join MLB’s greatest players in the Hall of Fame. Ripken, a hometown hero, always wanted to be a Baltimore Oriole. Gwynn, a San Diego Padre, always felt he had to compete for a job.

At their final MLB All-Star Game, Tony and Cal reminisced about their careers by sharing All-Star Game moments.

Both men will be best remembered for their heartfelt connection to their fans. In their last home game, they received gestures of love reserved for very few. Much of this can be traced to their long-term commitment to their respective communities.

Former President Bill Clinton described Ripken as one who “just showed up and gave 100% every day for days and days.” Gwynn’s peers called him “the best contact hitter,” and cited his work ethic. Tony simply called it “doing his homework” by studying his batting videos and taking early batting practice every day.

**Educational theme:** Recognition by the National Baseball Hall of Fame is a way to call attention to and validate a successful baseball career.

**Educational theme:** Competition and fun are important when combined to create the ultimate motivational experience for children of all ages.

**Educational theme:** Love must be mutual. In this case, it is an example of a mutual relationship between fans and players. The components of love are respect, responsibility, understanding, labor and mutual feelings.

**Educational theme:** Perfect preparation leads to perfect performance. The will to prepare to win is more important than the will to win.

**Educational theme:** Hustle does not take any ability. It just takes pride and desire. There are no excuses for not hustling because hustle is a habit.

**“Act Two”:** The “Top Five Things You Didn’t Know About the Two Hall of Fame inductees were noted. First, the only player to win more than Gwynn’s eight batting titles is the great Ty Cobb with 12. Second, Ripken is the first player to win the Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player awards in back-to-back seasons. Third, Gwynn’s career .338 batting average is the highest since Ted Williams. Fourth, Ripken only made three errors in 1990, which is the fewest in MLB history by a shortstop in one season. Finally, Gwynn made 577 plate appearances one year and struck out only 15 times. That is the best ratio for a full season since 1979.

**Educational theme:** Documentation of athletic achievements and record setting performances are part of sports history. These become the standards that measure accomplishments.

**Educational theme:** Records are methods to define achievement and preserve elite athletic performances. Records also provide much of the tradition of sport.

**“Pitch, Hit and Run”:** The TWIBIA question was answered with the fact that “The Georgia Peach,” Ty Cobb holds the MLB record for the most seasons (6) with 200 hits and 50 stolen bases in a single year.

This year MLB is presenting “The Clutch Player of the Month,” as voted on by the fans. This week TWIB recalled some of the clutch performances by Gwynn and Ripken.

Gwynn’s clutch hit and his base running hustle in the 1994 All-Star Game, and his .500 batting average in the 1998 World Series were cited. So was Ripken’s clutch and dramatic home run on the night when he broke the legendary Yankee Lou Gehrig’s consecutive games played streak at 2131, and the home run in his final All-Star Game.

The TWIB Note recalled that Tony hit .394 in 1994 to fall just short of the coveted .400 batting average. Tony needed only three more base hits that year to reach the magical mark.

**Educational theme:** Trivia is the source of fun and entertainment from every aspect of baseball, even though it seems to be insignificant and superfluous. Trivia often is the source of the lure and legend that makes baseball interesting all year around.

**Educational theme:** Pressure situations are opportunities to prove oneself.

**“Front Row Fans”:** Baltimore native and actor Edward Norton idolized Cal Ripken, Jr. throughout Cal’s career. But now that he’s older, Norton embraces Cal’s consecutive games played streak in a different fashion. Edward views it more for the courage it took to attain it than talent. “It is the character of the town,” he said. “It’s a working man’s record.” As Ripken neared the end of his career, Cal invited Norton to take pre-game batting practice with the Orioles.

**Educational theme:** Spectators have deep loyalties to individual players and teams contributing to the total meaning of baseball in the American culture.

**Educational theme:** The harder one works the harder it is to surrender.

**Educational theme:** Young children measure success with effort and by attempting to improve their skills. Once again, this is demonstration of a series of baseball skills requiring maximum effort.

**Educational theme:** Honor is what you take with you, but character is the heritage you leave behind.

**“How ‘bout that!”:** This segment showed the fundamental skills of baseball by showing the best plays of the week. Outfielders, infielders and catchers showed an amazing reach of spectacular defensive plays including diving, running, sliding, over-the-shoulder and fence crashing catches. Hitters were shown hitting several home runs.

**Educational theme:** Children can discover and appreciate the artistic value of sport in the beauty, grace and rhythmic movement of elite athletes.

**Educational theme:** To be physically educated children must learn a multitude of athletic movements and skills. By carefully watching the biomechanical movements, they can comprehend, copy and perform the actions.