

**Re: This Week In Baseball**  
**Air Date: April 23, 2011**

### **TWIB Show #1204 "Pitching"**

**Act One "Pitching Tournament":** This week, TWIB asked the timeless question, "Who is the best starting pitcher in the game today?" To find the answer 12 staff aces - six from each league - were matched up against each other in a tournament format. Based on last year's performances, first round byes were given to the Phillies' Roy Halladay and the Braves' Ubaldo Jimenez in the NL, and the Mariners' Felix Hernandez and the Rays' David Price in the AL. The other American League pitchers in the bracket were Trevor Cahill of the Athletics, Jon Lester of the Red Sox, CC Sabathia of the Yankees and Jared Weaver of the Angels. The other National League pitchers selected were Tim Lincecum of the Giants, Matt Latos of the Padres, Zack Greinke of the Brewers and Josh Johnson of the Marlins. During spring training, players throughout baseball were asked to fill out their brackets and the finalists in this single elimination tournament were Sabathia versus Halladay. The final result will be determined by fans who vote on Facebook or Twitter.

**Educational theme:** Starting pitching is what baseball is all about. Putting together a starting pitching staff is a process that only takes a few good men. Every rotation begins with a small group of pitchers.

**Educational theme:** A tournament bracket format is an especially interesting method to provide subjective standards of achievement and evaluation, while providing fun and interest for both players and fans.

**Educational theme:** Voting is an excellent method to create new experiences for fans. Aficionados are enthusiastic devotees to a sport, team and/ or player. Sports fans particularly have fun watching baseball and "talking baseball."

**Act Two - "Best Rotation":** The next question asked was, "What team has the best starting rotation?" Many players reluctantly declined to answer the question due to a "home team" bias, so the question was modified to exclude their own team. Some players believe the Tampa Bay Rays have the best starting rotation. Their staff, which had the third best ERA in the AL last year, is headlined by David Price and prized prospect Jeremy Hellickson. The Boston Red Sox rotation of Josh Becket, John Lackey and the youngsters Jon Lester and Clay Buchholz are highly regarded. The sleeper staff may be the Oakland A's featuring Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson, Gio Gonzalez and Dallas Braden. Others felt the World Series Champion San Francisco Giants have the best rotation. Two-time Cy Young Award winner Tim Lincecum and Matt Cain top that rotation, which also includes Jonathan Sanchez, Madison Bumgarner and Barry Zito. But without question, the Philadelphia Phillies are considered the best as they feature Cole Hamels, Roy Halladay, Cliff Lee and Roy Oswalt. The Phillies have an NLCS MVP, a World Series MVP and a pair of Cy Young Award winners.

Drew Stubbs was asked the *TWIBIA* question -- Who holds the single-season big league record for the best strikeout to walk ratio? The answer is Bret Saberhagen who averaged 11 strikeouts for every walk in 1994.

*Winning Road Trips* celebrates the team and players who know how to win away

from home. The Angels Jared Weaver has won all five of his starts this year. Four of those have been on the road.

**Educational theme:** A starting pitching rotation normally involves four or five pitchers who are expected to pitch more than six innings. Most starting pitchers have several quality pitches and require three to five days in between starts.

**Educational theme:** Opinions are a vital component of fans love for baseball. It is the part of sport designed to create and enhance the atmosphere of excitement, joy and celebration. Everyone has opinions and it is fun.

**Educational theme:** Recognition is earned through superior performance, service, merit or longevity. This formal acknowledgement is meant to show appreciation by reward of public honor.

**Educational theme:** Trivia is a seemingly superfluous and insignificant event; however, it is an important component of baseball legend, lore and tradition. For both fans and players, trivia is a source of fun and interest in the American institution called baseball.

**Act Three - "Pepsi Max":** Again this week the MLB Fan Cave was featured. This week in honor of Jackie Robinson Day, Jackie's daughter Sharon shared insight into her father's historic legacy. Texas pitcher C.J. Wilson stopped by to show some of his favorite fans' tattoos. The highlight of the week was the visit of three Hall of Fame players, Mike Schmidt, Rollie Fingers and Ozzie Smith.

Gillette presented *The Rookie of the Month*, which honors the league's top rookies throughout the season. This week the Philadelphia Phillies had a robot from the University of Pennsylvania throw out a ceremonial first pitch. Unfortunately, Phillybot's throw came up a little short. So it is back to the drawing board to redesign Phillybot to throw more than 40 MPH.

**Educational theme:** Jackie Robinson's gift to all generations that followed was one of honor, academic achievement, equal opportunity and superior performance at the highest level of competition.

**Educational theme:** The practice of marking the skin is a source of information about the individual. In this case, it was symbolism of support for a team and the game of baseball.

**Educational theme:** Landmark performances are those that mark a turning point in history. An athletic accomplishment with historical significance is one that is marked for preservation by aficionados, players and national governing bodies of sport.

**Educational theme:** Fans and communities often establish passion for teams, individual athletes or machines. There is an importance for spectator support and interest. Cheering and sometimes booing raise the emotions of athletes that lead to enhanced performance.

**Act Four - "Diamond Demos":** Youngsters were encouraged to execute the fundamentals of the game. The experts at MLB Network, Harold Reynolds and Gary Sheffield explained how to hit the breaking ball. Sheffield's philosophy was to recognize the pitch early by seeing two fingers on the side of the ball coming over the top. Gary also believed there are sharp breaking curve balls that you lay off, while the hanging curve you hit to elevate.

*Going All Out* is a segment that honors special players who continually show

maximum effort. TWIB recalled some of the greatest starting pitching staffs from the past. The 1906 Chicago Cubs were led by Mordecai "Three Finger" Brown, Jack Pfiester, and Ed Reulbach. Brown had 26 wins. Pfiester won 20 games with a 1.51 ERA. Reulbach led the NL in win/loss percentage and fewest hits allowed for nine innings. The 1954 Cleveland Indians featured Bob Lemon, Early Wynn, and Mike Garcia. The Indians were about pitching. They led the AL in ERA and fewest runs allowed. The Atlanta Braves starting rotation was amazing with Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz. In 1997, the foursome included Denny Neagle, who led the NL with 20 wins. That foursome helped the Braves top the NL with a 3.18 ERA

*Big League Blast* comes from Cleveland. After more than a year without playing, Grady Sizemore came off the disabled list to hit a home run his first day back with the Indians.

**Educational theme:** Sports pedagogy is an important aspect of the learning process. Demonstration and explanation are initial steps in the process. Children learn best by watching and mimicking athletic performance.

**Educational theme:** The glory and romance are preserved in the chronicles of landmark performances because history is written by the winners.

**Educational theme:** Athletes returning to competition are naturally worried, as to their ability. Clutch performances occur when a player delivers under such circumstances. This is performing under pressure.

**Act Five - "How 'bout that!":** Some of the plays and misplays of the week were presented to the song "*MoneyGrabber*" set to the music by Fitz and The Tantrums. Baseballs were flying off the bats for some home runs. Outfielders were shown making sliding, amazing and leaping catches. Infielders made some great catches and throws. A few walk-off home runs and game-ending diving catches were shown that ended the games.

**Educational theme:** Teachers and coaches can utilize this as an opportunity for instruction. Sport pedagogy involves the demonstration and explanation of baseball biomechanics, strategies, skills, and mental aspects of athletic performance.

**Educational theme:** This segment shows the fun side of the multi-facets of baseball. Fun is simply the valuable use of one's time. It is a source of enjoyment or pleasure. When something is no longer fun, we stop doing it; therefore fun is the key to intrinsic motivation.

**Educational theme:** The artistic value of sport can be found in the beauty, grace, and rhythmic movements of elite athletes. The aesthetic quality of a well-executed play enhances the appreciation of baseball.

**Educational theme:** Once the student-learner has carefully observed the required effort and the bio-mechanics of the premier athletes, then the movements can be more easily duplicated and performed by the learner. The student is then physically educated.