

Summary

The Face of Sacrifice: A Rumination Upon MLB Tactics as a Reflection of the Celebrity Zeitgeist is an attempt to demonstrate a shift in historical Major League Baseball tactics in response to sociological phenomenon associated with celebrity and pop culture. Essentially, this visualization aims to show that the home run was adopted as a tactic circa 1922 as a response to and in competition with the burgeoning Hollywood star system; selfless team tactics such as sacrifice bunts were abandoned until around 1954 where upon they were reestablished but never to levels seen previously. In contrast, home runs were adopted as a way to establish baseball's own stars and compete for the attention of the nation's populace.

Design

This Tableau Story incorporates three Dashboards, a tryptic design. Each Dashboard incorporates three Sheets. Dashboard 1 collects together Sheets 1-3, Home Runs by Year, Sacrifice Flys by Year and Sacrifice Bunts by Year. The graph of Sacrifice Flys by Year was Filtered to start at 1953 as evidently they did not exist as a tactic until that year. Dashboard 2 collects together Sheets 4-6: Sacrifice Bunts vs. Home Runs by Year, Sacrifice Flys vs. Home Runs by Year and Sacrifice Bunts and Flys vs. Home Runs by Year. Finally, Dashboard 3 collects together Sheets 7-9: Home Runs as a % of Runs by Year, Sacrifice Bunts and Flys as a % of Runs by Year and Sacrifice Bunts + Sacrifice Flys as a % of Runs vs. Home Runs as a % of Runs by Year. Each Dashboard collected together in the Story is accompanied by a short description: "Home Runs increase while sacrifice bunts decrease over time. Sacrifice flys are adopted as a tactic in 1954.", "Collectively, sacrifice bunts and sacrifice flys are overtaken by home runs circa 1922, well into the Roaring 20's, a period of individualized profit seeking and antecedent of the nascent Hollywood star system." and "Circa 1922, home runs as a percentage of runs over take sacrifice flys and bunts as a percentage of runs. The emphasis transitions from team effort to individual achievement." Initially circles were chosen as an alternative to line graphs based solely on the ubiquity of line graphs and their association with finance, stocks, etc. The graphs also enabled interactive scrolling via a scroll bar which was felt allowed for more interaction and exploration of the data.

Feedback

The project was shown to two individuals who both expressed similar criticisms which were both incorporated into the design of the project. Initially, both

remarked about the stacked bottom graphs not being visible which was solved by switching Tableau to Presentation Mode. Both then demanded wider graphs which took up the entirety of the page rather than scrolling, as well as graphs comprised of lines instead of circles. The offending graphs were switched to Line and the Fit for Sheets 4-6, Dashboard 2, and Sheets 7-9 and Dashboard 3 was switched to Fit Width.

After submitting the project, grader feedback suggested replacing abbreviations for terminology such as home runs in legends, labels and calculated measures with fuller descriptions. These changes were subsequently implemented to aid understanding.

Resources

<http://www.seanlahman.com/baseball-archive/statistics/>
<http://onlinehelp.tableau.com>

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/david.smyth1236#!/vizhome/TheFaceofSacrifice1/Story1>
<https://public.tableau.com/profile/david.smyth1236#!/vizhome/TheFaceofSacrifice2/Story1>