

1901–1902: Origins in Baltimore

In 1900, Ban Johnson, the president of a minor league known as the Western League (1894–1899),^[10] changed the Western League name to the American League (AL) and asked the National League to classify it as a major league.^[10] Johnson held that his league would operate in friendly terms with the National League, but the National League ridiculed the plan. Johnson declared official major league status for his league in 1901.^[10]

Plans to add a team in New York City were blocked by the NL's New York Giants.^[11] A team was instead placed in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1901 named the Orioles.^[12] Between 1901 and 1903, many players and coaches on the Orioles roster jumped to the Giants.^[12] In January 1903, a "peace conference" was held between the two leagues to settle disputes and try to coexist.^[citation needed] At the conference, Johnson requested that an AL team be put in New York, to play alongside the NL's Giants.^[13] It was put to a vote, and 15 of the 16 major league owners agreed on it.^[11] The Orioles' new owners, Frank J. Farrell^[14] and William S. Devery moved the team to New York in 1903.^[15]

1903–1912: Move to New York and the Highlanders years

Hilltop Park, home of the Highlanders

The team's new ballpark, Hilltop Park (formally known as "American League Park"), was constructed in one of Upper Manhattan's highest points—between 165th and 168th Streets.^[16] The team was named the New York Highlanders.^[16] Fans believed the name was chosen because of the team's elevated location in Upper Manhattan, or as a nod to team president Joseph Gordon's Scottish-Irish heritage (the Gordon Highlanders were a well known Scottish military unit).^{[17][18]}

Initially, the team was commonly referred to as the New York Americans. The team was also referred to as the "Invaders" in the Evening Journal.^[19] New York Press Sports Editor Jim Price coined the unofficial nickname Yankees (or "Yanks") for the club as early as 1904, because it was easier to fit in headlines.^{[20][13]}

The Highlanders finished second in the AL in 1904, 1906, and 1910.^[21] In 1904, they lost the deciding game to the Boston Americans, who later became the Boston Red Sox. That year, Highlander pitcher Jack Chesbro set the single-season wins record at 41.^[22] At this time there was no formal World Series agreement wherein the AL and NL winners would play each other.^[22]

1913–1922: New owners, a new home, and a new name: Years at the Polo Grounds

The Polo Grounds, home of the Yankees from 1913 to 1922, was demolished in 1964, after the Mets had moved to Shea Stadium in Flushing.

The original Polo Grounds burned down in 1911 and the Highlanders shared Hilltop Park with the Giants during a two-month renovation period.[23] Later, from 1913 to 1922, the Highlanders shared the Polo Grounds with the Giants.[23] While playing at the Polo Grounds, the name "Highlanders" fell into disuse among the press. In 1913 the team became officially known as the New York Yankees.[20]

By the middle of the decade, Yankees owners Farrell and Devery had become estranged and in need of money. At the start of 1915, they sold the team to Colonel Jacob Ruppert, a brewer, and Captain Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston, a contractor-engineer.[3][24]

1923–1935: Sluggers and the Stadium: Ruth, Gehrig, and Murderer's Row

With his hitting prowess, Babe Ruth ushered in an offensive-oriented era of baseball and helped lead the Yankees to four World Series titles.

In the years around 1920, the Yankees, the Red Sox, and the Chicago White Sox had a détente.[25] The trades between the three ball clubs antagonized Ban Johnson and garnered the teams the nickname "The Insurrectos".[26][27] This détente paid off well for the Yankees as they increased their payroll. Most new players who later contributed to the team's success came from the Red Sox, whose owner, Harry Frazee, was trading them for large sums of money to finance his theatrical productions.[28][29] Pitcher-turned-outfielder Babe Ruth was the most talented of all the acquisitions from Boston, and the outcome of that trade would haunt the Red Sox for the next 86 years, a span in which the team did not win a single World Series championship.[30] This phenomenon eventually became known as the Curse of the Bambino as the failure of the Red Sox and the success of the Yankees seemed almost supernatural, and seemed to stem from that one trade.[31] However, it was not until 1990 when Dan Shaughnessy of The Boston Globe wrote a book with the same title that the curse was publicized.[32]

Ruth's multitude of home runs proved so popular that the Yankees began drawing more people than their National League counterpart, the Giants.[27] In 1921 — the year after acquiring Ruth — the Yankees played in their first World Series.[33][34] They competed against the Giants,[34] and all eight games of the series were played in the Polo Grounds.[35] After the 1922 season, the Yankees were told to move out of the Polo Grounds.[36] Giants manager John McGraw was said to have commented that the Yankees should "move to some out-of-the-way place, like Queens", [citation needed] but they instead broke ground for a new ballpark in the Bronx, right across the Harlem River from the Polo Grounds.[36] In 1922, the Yankees returned to the World Series again and were dealt a second defeat at the hands of the Giants.[37] Manager Miller Huggins and general manager Ed Barrow were important newcomers in this period. The hiring of Huggins by Ruppert in 1918 caused a rift between the owners that eventually led to Ruppert buying Huston out in 1923.[38]

Lou Gehrig was the first Yankees player to have his number retired, in 1939, which was the same year that he retired from baseball due to a crippling disease.

In 1923, the Yankees moved to their new home, Yankee Stadium,[39] which took 11 months to build and cost \$2.5 million. The team announced that 99,200 fans showed up on Opening Day and 25,000 were turned away.[40] In the first game at Yankee Stadium, Ruth hit a home run.[41] The stadium was nicknamed "The House That Ruth Built", due mainly to the fact that Ruth had doubled Yankees' attendance, which helped the team pay for the new stadium.[42] At the end of the season, the Yankees faced the Giants in the World Series for the third straight year and won their first championship.[43]

In the 1927 season, the Yankees featured a lineup that became known as "Murderers' Row", and some consider this team to be the best in the history of baseball (though similar claims have been made for other Yankee squads, notably those of 1939, 1961 and 1998).[44]

That season, the Yankees became the first team in baseball to occupy first place every day of the season, winning 110 games.[45] The team also swept the Pittsburgh Pirates in the World Series.[45] Ruth's home run total of 60 in 1927 set a single-season home run record that stood until it was broken by Roger Maris in 1961, although Maris had eight additional games in which to break the record.[45] Meanwhile, first baseman Lou Gehrig had his first big season, batting .373 with 47 home runs and 175 RBI,[46] beating Ruth's single-season RBI mark (171 in 1921).[citation needed] The Yankees won the World Series again in 1928.[47]

In 1931, Joe McCarthy was hired as manager and brought the Yankees back to the top of the AL. They swept the Chicago Cubs in the 1932 World Series, and brought the team's streak of consecutive World Series game wins to 12. This series was made famous by Babe Ruth's "Called Shot" in game three of the series at Wrigley Field, a fitting "swan song" to his illustrious World Series career. In 1935, Ruth left the Yankees to join the NL's Boston Braves,[48] and he made his last major league baseball appearance on May 30 of that year.[49]

1936–1951: Joltin' Joe DiMaggio

In 1941, Joe DiMaggio set an MLB record with a 56-game hitting streak that stands to this day and will probably never be broken.

After Ruth left the Yankees following the 1934 season,[48] Gehrig finally had a chance to take center stage, but it was only one year before a new star appeared, Joe DiMaggio. The team won an unprecedented four straight World Series titles from 1936 to 1939.[50] For most of 1939, however, they

had to do it without Gehrig, who took himself out of the lineup on May 2 and retired due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, which was later known as "Lou Gehrig's Disease" in his memory.[51][52] The Yankees declared July 4, 1939 to be "Lou Gehrig Day", on which they retired his number 4, the first retired number in baseball.[53] Gehrig made a famous speech in which he declared himself to be "the luckiest man on the face of the earth." [54] He died two years later on June 2, 1941.[55]

The 1941 season was often described as the last year of the "Golden Era" before the United States entered World War II and other realities intervened. It was a thrilling year as America watched two major events unfold: Ted Williams of the Red Sox hitting for the elusive .400 batting average and Joe DiMaggio getting hits in consecutive ballgames. By the end of his hitting streak, DiMaggio hit in 56 consecutive games, the current major league record and one often deemed unbreakable.[56]

Two months after the Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1941 World Series—the first of seven October meetings between the two crosstown rivals before the Dodgers moved to Los Angeles—the United States naval fleet was attacked at Pearl Harbor by the Empire of Japan, and many of their best players, including DiMaggio, entered the military during World War II. The Yankees still managed to pull out a win against the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1943 World Series.

In 1945 construction magnate Del Webb and partners Dan Topping and Larry MacPhail purchased the team from the Ruppert estate for \$2.8 million;[57][58] MacPhail was bought out in 1947.[59]

After a few slumping seasons, McCarthy was fired early in 1946. A few interim managers later, Bucky Harris took the job, righting the ship and taking the Yankees to a hard-fought series victory against the Dodgers.

Despite finishing only three games behind the Cleveland Indians in the 1948 pennant race, Harris was relieved of his duties and replaced by Casey Stengel, who had a reputation of being a clown and managing bad teams. His tenure as Yankees' field manager, however, was marked with success. The "underdog" Yankees came from behind to catch and surprise a powerful Red Sox team on the last two days of the 1949 season, a face-off that fueled the beginning of the modern Yankees–Red Sox rivalry. By this time, however, DiMaggio's career was winding down, and the "Yankee Clipper" retired after the 1951 season. This year marked the arrival of the "Oklahoma Kid", Mickey Mantle, who was one of several new stars to fill the gap.

1951–1959: Stengel's Squad

Opening Day of the 1951 baseball season at Griffith Stadium. President Harry Truman throws out the first ball as Bucky Harris and Casey Stengel look on.

Bettering the clubs managed by Joe McCarthy, the Yankees won the World Series five consecutive times from 1949–1953 under Stengel, which remains an MLB record. Led by players like center fielder Mickey Mantle, pitcher Whitey Ford, and catcher Yogi Berra, Stengel's teams won ten pennants and seven World Series titles in his 12 seasons as the Yankees manager. The 1950 title was the only one of those five championships not to be won against either the New York Giants or Brooklyn Dodgers; it was won in four straight games against the Whiz Kids of the Philadelphia Phillies.

In 1954, the Yankees won 103 games, but the Cleveland Indians took the pennant with a then-AL record 111 wins; 1954 was famously referred to as The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant. In 1955, the Dodgers finally beat the Yankees in the World Series, after five previous Series losses to them. The Yankees came back strong the next year. In Game 5 of the 1956 World Series against the Dodgers, pitcher Don Larsen threw the only perfect game in World Series history,[60] which remains the only perfect game in postseason play and the only postseason no-hitter until 2010.[61]

The Yankees lost the 1957 World Series to the Milwaukee Braves when Lew Burdette incredibly won three games for the Braves. Following the Series, the New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers both left for San Francisco and Los Angeles, respectively. This left the Yankees as New York's only baseball team. In the 1958 World Series, the Yankees got their revenge against the Braves and became the second team to win the Series after being down 3–1. For the decade, the Yankees won six World Series championships (1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1956, 1958) and eight American League pennants (those six plus 1955 and 1957). Led by Mantle, Ford, Berra, Elston Howard (the Yankees' first African-American player), and the newly acquired Roger Maris, the Yankees entered the 1960s seeking to replicate their success of the 1950s.

1960–1964: Mantle and Maris

Mickey Mantle was one of the franchise's most celebrated hitters, highlighted by his 1956 Triple Crown and World Series championship.

Arnold Johnson, owner of the Kansas City Athletics, was a longtime business associate of then-Yankees co-owners Del Webb and Dan Topping. Because of this "special relationship" with the Yankees, he traded young players to them in exchange for cash and aging veterans. Invariably, these trades ended up being heavily tilted in the Yankees' favor, leading to accusations that the Athletics were little more than a Yankees farm team at the major league level.[62] Kansas City had been home to the Yankees' top farm team for almost 20 years before the Athletics moved there from Philadelphia in 1954.

In 1960, Charles O. Finley purchased the Athletics and put an end to the trades. At that point, however, the Yankees had already strengthened their supply of future prospects, which included a young outfielder named Roger Maris.[63] In 1960, Maris led the league in slugging percentage, RBI, and extra base hits. He finished second in home runs (one behind Mickey Mantle) and total bases, and won a Gold Glove, which garnered enough votes for the American League MVP award.

The year 1961 was one of the most memorable in Yankees history. Mantle and Maris hit home runs at a fast pace and became known as the "M&M Boys".[13][64] Ultimately, a severe hip infection forced Mantle to leave the lineup. Maris continued though, and on October 1, the last day of the regular season, he hit home run number 61, surpassing Babe Ruth's single-season home run record of 60.[65] However, MLB Commissioner Ford Frick (who, as it was discovered later, had ghostwritten for Babe Ruth during his career) decreed that since Maris had played in a 162-game season, and Ruth (in 1927) had played in a 154-game season, two separate records would be kept for 30 years, until MLB reversed course and Maris held the record alone. His record would be broken by Mark McGwire, who hit 70 home runs in 1998.[66] Maris still holds the American League record.

The Yankees won the pennant with a 109–53 record and went on to defeat the Cincinnati Reds in the 1961 World Series. The team finished the year with a record 240 home runs.

In 1962, the sports scene in New York changed when the National League added an expansion team, the New York Mets, who played at the Giants' former home, the Polo Grounds, for two seasons while Shea Stadium was under construction in nearby Flushing, Queens. This restored New York as a city with more than one team, as it had been from the late 1800s until 1957. The Yankees won the 1962 World Series, their tenth in the past sixteen years, defeating the San Francisco Giants 4–3. It was the Yankees' last championship until 1977.

The Yankees easily reached the 1963 World Series when they won the pennant by 10.5 games, but they scored only four runs in the series and were swept by the Los Angeles Dodgers and their ace pitcher, Sandy Koufax. After the season, Yogi Berra, who had just retired from playing, took over managerial duties. The aging Yankees returned the next year for a fifth straight World Series, but were beaten 4–3 by the St. Louis Cardinals. It would be the Yankees' last World Series appearance until 1976.

1965–1972: New ownership and a steep decline

After the 1964 season, CBS purchased 80% of the Yankees from Topping and Webb for \$11.2 million.[67] With the new ownership, the team began to decline. The 1965 edition of the team posted a record of 77–85 — the Yankees' first losing record in 40 years.

In 1966, the Yankees finished in last place in the AL for the first time since 1912. It also marked their first consecutive losing seasons since 1917 and 1918. They finished next-to-last in 1967. While their fortunes improved somewhat in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they only finished higher than fourth once during CBS' ownership, in 1970.

The Yankees were not able to replace their aging superstars with promising young talent, as they had consistently done in the previous five decades. As early as the 1961–62 off-season, longtime fans noticed that the pipeline of talent had started to dry up. This was worsened by the introduction of the amateur draft that year, which meant that the Yankees could no longer sign any player they wanted. While the Yankees usually drafted fairly early during this period due to their lackluster records, Thurman Munson was the only pick who lived up to his billing.

1973–1981: Steinbrenner, Martin, Jackson, and Munson: the Bronx Zoo

A group of investors, led by Cleveland-based shipbuilder George Steinbrenner (1930–2010), purchased the club from CBS in 1973, for \$8.7 million.[68] Mike Burke stayed on as president until he quit in April. Within a year, Steinbrenner bought out most of his other partners and became the team's principal owner, although Burke continued to hold a minority share into the 1980s.

One of Steinbrenner's major goals was to renovate Yankee Stadium. It had greatly deteriorated by the late 1960s, and the surrounding neighborhood had gone south as well. CBS initially suggested renovations, but the team needed to play elsewhere, and the Mets refused to open their home, Shea Stadium, to the Yankees. A new stadium in the Meadowlands, across the Hudson River in New Jersey, was suggested (and was eventually built, as Giants Stadium, specifically for football). Finally, in mid-1972, Mayor John Lindsay stepped in. The city bought the stadium and began an extensive two-year renovation period. Since the city also owned Shea Stadium, the Mets were forced to allow the Yankees to play two seasons there. The renovations modernized the look of the stadium, significantly altered the dimensions, and reconfigured some of the seating.

In 1973, Steinbrenner started the rule as the only MLB-team with a personal appearance policy that includes being clean-shaven, with long hair slicked back or trimmed. This rule is still in effect today, and enforced by his sons after George's passing.

During 1974 and 1975, Yankee Stadium was renovated into its final shape and structure, as shown here in 2002, seven years before demolition.

After the 1974 season, Steinbrenner made a move that started the modern era of free agency, signing star pitcher Catfish Hunter away from Oakland. Midway through the 1975 season, the team hired

former second baseman Billy Martin as manager. With Martin at the helm, the Yankees reached the 1976 World Series, but were swept by the Cincinnati Reds and their famed "Big Red Machine."

After the 1976 campaign, Steinbrenner added star Oakland outfielder Reggie Jackson—who had spent 1976 with the Baltimore Orioles—to his roster. During spring training of 1977, Jackson alienated his teammates with controversial remarks about the Yankees captain, catcher Thurman Munson. He had bad blood with manager Billy Martin, who had managed the Detroit Tigers when Jackson's Athletics defeated them in the 1972 playoffs. Jackson, Martin, and Steinbrenner repeatedly feuded with each other throughout Jackson's 5-year contract. Martin was hired and fired by Steinbrenner five times over the next 13 years. This conflict, combined with the extremely rowdy Yankees fans of the late 1970s and the bad conditions of the Bronx, led to the Yankees organization and stadium being referred to as the "Bronx Zoo." [69] Despite the turmoil, Jackson hit four home runs in 1977 World Series and earned the Series MVP Award, and the nickname "Mr. October." [70]

Throughout the late 1970s, the race for the pennant was often a close competition between the Yankees and the Red Sox. On July 14, 1978, the Yankees were 14 1/2 games behind the Red Sox. In late July, Martin suspended Reggie Jackson for "defiance" after he bunted while Martin had the "swing" signal on. [71] Upon Jackson's return, Martin made a famous statement against both Jackson and owner Steinbrenner: "They deserve each other. One's a born liar; the other's convicted." Martin was forced to resign the next day and was replaced by Bob Lemon. This came while the team was winning five games in a row and Boston was losing five in a row. [72]

The Yankees continued to win games, making up ground and by the time they met Boston for a pivotal four-game series at Fenway Park in early September. Going into the series, the Yankees were four games behind the Red Sox. The Yankees swept the Red Sox in what became known as the "Boston Massacre," winning the games 15–3, 13–2, 7–0, and 7–4. The third game was a shutout pitched by "Louisiana Lightning" Ron Guidry, who led the majors with nine shutouts, a 25–3 record, and a 1.74 ERA. On the last day of the season, the two clubs finished in a tie for first place in the AL East, and a tiebreaker game was held at Fenway Park. With Guidry pitching against former Yankee Mike Torrez, the Red Sox took an early 2–0 lead. In the seventh inning, light-hitting Yankee shortstop Bucky Dent drove a three-run home run over the Fenway Park's Green Monster, putting the Yankees up 3–2. Reggie Jackson's solo home run in the following inning sealed the eventual 5–4 win that gave the Yankees their one hundredth win of the season and their third straight AL East title. Guidry earned his 25th win of the season.

After defeating the Kansas City Royals for the third consecutive year in the ALCS, the Yankees faced the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series. They lost the first two games in Los Angeles, but won all three games at Yankee Stadium and Game 6 back in Los Angeles, winning their 22nd World Championship.

Changes occurred during the 1979 season. Former Cy Young Award-winning closer Sparky Lyle was traded to the Texas Rangers for several players, including Dave Righetti. Tommy John was acquired from the Dodgers and Luis Tiant from the Red Sox to bolster the pitching staff. During the season, Bob Lemon was replaced by Billy Martin.

The mask and catcher's mitt of Thurman Munson, the team captain who was killed in a plane crash in 1979

The 1970s ended on a tragic note for the Yankees. On August 2, 1979, catcher Thurman Munson died when his private plane crashed while he was practicing touch-and-go landings.[73] Four days later, the entire team flew out to Canton, Ohio, for the funeral, despite having a game later that day against the Orioles. Martin adamantly stated that the funeral was more important and that he did not care if they made it back in time. Bobby Murcer, a close friend of Munson's, was chosen to give the eulogy at his funeral. In a nationally televised and emotional game, Murcer used Munson's bat (which he gave to his fallen friend's wife after the game), and drove in all five of the team's runs in a dramatic 5–4 walk-off victory. Before the game, Munson's locker sat empty except for his catching gear, a sad reminder for his teammates. His locker, labeled with his number 15, has remained empty in the Yankees clubhouse as a memorial. When the Yankees moved across the street, Munson's locker was torn out and installed in the new Stadium's museum. The number 15 has been retired by the team.

The 1980 season brought more changes. Billy Martin was fired once again and Dick Howser took his place. Chris Chambliss was traded to the Toronto Blue Jays for catcher Rick Cerone. Reggie Jackson hit .300 for the only time in his career with 41 homers, and finished 2nd in the MVP voting to Kansas City's George Brett. The Yankees won 103 games and the AL East by three games over the Baltimore Orioles, but were swept by the Royals in the ALCS.

After the season ended, the Yankees signed Dave Winfield to a 10-year contract. The team fired Howser and replaced him with Gene Michael. Under Michael, the Yankees led the AL East before a strike hit in June 1981. In the second half of the season, the Yankees struggled under Bob Lemon, who replaced Michael. Thanks to the split-season playoff format, the Yankees faced the second-half winner Milwaukee Brewers in the special 1981 American League Division Series. After defeating Milwaukee 3–2, they swept the Oakland Athletics in a three-game ALCS. In the World Series, the Yankees won the first two games against the Los Angeles Dodgers. But the Dodgers fought back to win the next four games to claim the World Series title.

1982–1995: Struggles during the Mattingly years

Don Mattingly headlined a Yankees franchise that struggled in the 1980s.

Following the team's loss to the Dodgers in the 1981 World Series, the Yankees began their longest absence from the playoffs since 1921. Following the example set by the St. Louis Cardinals and the Big Red Machine, Steinbrenner announced his plan to transform the Yankees from the "Bronx Bombers" into the "Bronx Burners," increasing the Yankees' ability to win games based on speed and defense[74] instead of "waiting around for a 3 run home run." As a first step towards this end, the Yankees signed Dave Collins from the Cincinnati Reds during the 1981 off-season.[75] Collins was traded to the Toronto Blue Jays after the 1982 season in a deal that also included future All-Stars Fred McGriff and Mike Morgan.[76] In return the Yankees got Dale Murray and Tom Dodd.

The Yankees of the 1980s were led by All-Star first baseman Don Mattingly. In spite of accumulating the most total wins of any major league team, they failed to win a World Series (the 1980s were the first decade since the 1910s in which the Yankees did not win at least two Series) and had only two playoff appearances.[77] Although they consistently had a powerful offense —Mattingly at various times was teammate to Dave Winfield (whom Mattingly battled for the AL batting title through most of the 1984 season), Rickey Henderson, Don Baylor, Ken Griffey, Sr., Mike Pagliarulo, Steve Sax, and Jesse Barfield, and the Yankees led MLB in runs scored for the decade — the Yankees teams of the 1980s lacked sufficient starting pitching to win a championship. After posting a 22–6 record in 1985, arm problems caught up with Guidry, and his performance declined over the next three years. Of the remaining mainstays of the Yankees' rotation, only Dave Righetti stood out, pitching a no-hitter on July 4, 1983, but he was moved to the bullpen the next year where he helped to define the closer role. Despite the Yankees' lack of pitching success during the 1980s, they had three of the premier pitchers of the early 1990s on their roster during these years in Al Leiter, Doug Drabek and José Rijo. All were mismanaged and dealt away before they could reach their full potential, with only Rijo returning much value – he was traded to the Oakland A's in the deal that brought Henderson to New York.

The team came close to winning the AL East in 1985 and 1986, finishing second to the Toronto Blue Jays and Boston Red Sox, respectively, but fell to fourth place in 1987 and fifth in 1988, despite having mid-season leads in the AL East both years.

By the end of the decade, the Yankees' offense declined. Henderson and Pagliarulo had departed by the middle of 1989, while back problems hampered both Winfield (who missed the entire 1989 season) and Mattingly (who missed almost the entire second half of 1990). Winfield's tenure with the team ended when he was dealt to the California Angels. From 1989 to 1992, the team had a losing record, spending significant money on free-agents and draft picks who did not live up to expectations. In 1990, the Yankees had the worst record in the American League, and their fourth last-place finish in franchise history.

On July 1, 1990, pitcher Andy Hawkins became the first Yankee ever to lose despite throwing a no-hitter. Third baseman Mike Blowers committed an error, followed by two walks and an error by the left fielder Jim Leyritz with the bases loaded, scoring all three runners and the batter. The 4–0 loss to the Chicago

White Sox was the largest margin of any no-hitter loss in the 20th century. Ironically, the Yankees (and Hawkins) were no-hit for six innings in a rain-shortened game against the White Sox 11 days later.

During the 1990 season, Yankee fans started to chant "1918!" to taunt the Red Sox, reminding them of the last time they won a World Series one weekend the Red Sox were there in 1990.[78] Each time the Red Sox were at Yankee Stadium afterward, chants of "1918!" echoed through the stadium.[79] Yankee fans also taunted the Red Sox with signs saying "CURSE OF THE BAMBINO", pictures of Babe Ruth, and wearing "1918!" T-shirts each time they were at the stadium.[79]

The poor showings in the 1980s and early 1990s soon changed. Steinbrenner hired Howard Spira to uncover damaging information on Winfield and was subsequently suspended from day-to-day team operations by Commissioner Fay Vincent when the plot was revealed. This turn of events allowed management to implement a coherent acquisition/development program without owner interference. General Manager Gene Michael, along with manager Buck Showalter, shifted the club's emphasis from high-priced acquisitions to developing talent through the farm system. This new philosophy developed key players such as outfielder Bernie Williams, shortstop Derek Jeter, catcher Jorge Posada, and pitchers Andy Pettitte and Mariano Rivera. The first significant success came in 1994, when the Yankees had the best record in the AL, but the season was cut short by a players' strike.[80][81] Because the Yankees were last in a postseason in a season cut short by a strike, the news media constantly reminded the Yankees about the parallels between these two Yankees teams, which included both teams having division leads taken away by strike.[82][83] Throughout October, the media continued to speculate about what might have been if there had not been a strike, making references to the day's games in the postseason would have been played.[84]

A year later, the team qualified for the playoffs in the new wild card slot in the strike shortened 1995 season. In the memorable 1995 American League Division Series against the Seattle Mariners, the Yankees won the first two games at home and lost the next three in Seattle. Although Mattingly batted .417 with a home run and six RBI in the only postseason series of his career, his back problems led him to retire after the 1995 season.

1996–2007: Core Four: Jeter, Posada, Pettitte, and Rivera

The Yankees' success in the late 1990s and early 2000s was built from a core of productive players that included Jorge Posada, Mariano Rivera, and Derek Jeter.

Joe Torre had a mediocre run as a manager in the National League,[85] and the choice was initially derided ("Clueless Joe" was a headline in the New York Daily News).[86] However, his calm demeanor proved to be a good fit, and his tenure was the longest under George Steinbrenner's ownership.

The 1996 season saw the rise of three Yankees who formed the core of the team for years to come: rookie shortstop Derek Jeter, second-year starting pitcher Andy Pettitte, and second-year pitcher Mariano Rivera, who served as setup man in 1996 before becoming closer in 1997. Aided by these young players, the Yankees won their first AL East title in 15 years. They defeated the Texas Rangers in the ALDS, and in ALCS beat the Baltimore Orioles 4–1, which included a notable fan interference by Jeffrey Maier that was called as a home run for the Yankees. In the World Series the team rebounded from an 0–2 series deficit and defeated the defending champion Atlanta Braves, ending an 18-year championship drought. Jeter was named Rookie of the Year.[87] In 1997, the Yankees lost the 1997 ALDS to the Cleveland Indians 3–2. General manager Bob Watson stepped down and was replaced by assistant general manager Brian Cashman.

The 1998 Yankees are widely acknowledged to be one of the greatest teams in baseball history, compiling a record of 114–48, a then–AL record for the most wins in a season. On May 17, 1998, David Wells pitched a perfect game against the Minnesota Twins.[88] The Yankees went on to sweep the San Diego Padres in the World Series. Their 125 combined regular and postseason wins remains an MLB single-season record.

On July 18, 1999, David Cone pitched a perfect game against the Montreal Expos. The ALCS was the Yankees' first postseason meeting with the rival Red Sox. The 1999 Yankees defeated the Red Sox 4–1 and swept the Braves in the 1999 World Series giving the 1998–99 Yankees a combined 22–3 record in the (including four series sweeps) in the six post-season series those years.

In 2000, the Yankees faced the Mets in the first New York City Subway World Series in 44 years. The Yankees won the series in 5 games, but a loss in Game 3 snapped their streak of consecutive games won in World Series contests at 14, surpassing the club's previous record of 12 (in 1927, 1928, and 1932). The Yankees are the last MLB team to repeat as World Series champions and after the 2000 season they joined the Yankees teams of 1936–39 and 1949–53, as well as the 1972–74 Oakland Athletics as the only teams to win at least three consecutive World Series.

In aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Yankees defeated the Oakland Athletics in the ALDS, and the Seattle Mariners in the ALCS. By winning the pennant for a fourth straight year, the 1998–2001 Yankees joined the 1921–24 New York Giants, and the Yankees teams of 1936–39, 1949–53, 1955–58 and 1960–64 as the only teams to win at least four straight pennants. The Yankees won 11 consecutive postseason series in this 4-year period. In the World Series against the Arizona Diamondbacks, the Yankees lost the series when Rivera uncharacteristically blew a save in the bottom of the ninth inning of Game 7.[89][90] Also, despite a very poor series overall, batting under .200, Derek Jeter got the nickname, "Mr. November", echoing comparisons to Reggie Jackson's "Mr. October", for his walk-off home run in Game 4, though it began October 31, as the game ended in the first minutes of November 1. In addition, the Yankees' home field in the aftermath of the attacks served as hosts of a memorial service titled "Prayer for America."

A vastly revamped Yankees team finished the 2002 season with an AL best record of 103–58. The season was highlighted by Alfonso Soriano becoming the first second baseman ever to hit 30 home runs and steal 30 bases in a season. In the ALDS the Yankees lost to the eventual World Series champion Anaheim Angels 3–1.

In 2003, the Yankees again had the best league record (101–61), highlighted by Roger Clemens' 300th win and 4000th strikeout. In the ALCS, they defeated the Boston Red Sox in a dramatic seven game series, which featured a bench-clearing incident in Game 3 and a series-ending walk-off home run by Aaron Boone in the bottom of the 11th inning of Game 7. In the World Series the Yankees lost in 6 games to the Florida Marlins.

Yankees' third baseman Alex Rodriguez, 2007

In 2004, the Yankees acquired Alex Rodriguez, who moved to third base from his usual shortstop position to accommodate Jeter.[91] In the ALCS, the Yankees met the Boston Red Sox again, and became the first team in professional baseball history, and only the third team in North American professional sports history, to lose a best-of-seven series after taking a 3–0 series lead.

In 2005 Alex Rodriguez won the American League MVP award, becoming the first Yankee to win the award since Don Mattingly in 1985. The Yankees again won the AL East by virtue of a tiebreaker but lost the ALDS 3–2 to the Angels. The 2006 season was highlighted by a 5-game series sweep of the Red Sox at Fenway Park (sometimes referred to as the "Second Boston Massacre"), outscoring the Red Sox 49–26.[92]

Despite winning the AL East for the ninth consecutive year, the Yankees lost again in the ALDS, this time to the Detroit Tigers. After the ALDS was over, tragedy struck when pitcher Cory Lidle died when his plane crashed into a highrise apartment building in Manhattan. Along with Thurman Munson, Lidle was the second active Yankee to be killed in a private plane crash.

On June 18, 2007, the Yankees broke new ground by signing the first two professional baseball players from the People's Republic of China to the MLB,[93] and became the first team in MLB history to sign an advertising deal with a Chinese company.[94] The Yankees' streak of nine straight AL East division titles ended in 2007, but they still reached the playoffs with the AL Wild Card. For the third year in a row, the team lost in the first round of the playoffs, as the Cleveland Indians defeated the Yankees, 3–1, in the 2007 ALDS. After the series, Joe Torre declined a reduced-length and compensation contract offer from the Yankees and returned to the National League as manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

2008–2016: Championship run, followed by losing streak

Joe Girardi was a Yankees catcher before he became manager in 2008.

After Torre's departure, the Yankees signed former catcher Joe Girardi to a three-year contract to manage the club.[95] The 2008 season was the last season played at Yankee Stadium. To celebrate the final year and history of Yankee Stadium, the 2008 Major League Baseball All-Star Game was played there.[96] The final regular-season game at Yankee Stadium was played on September 21, 2008.[97] After the game, Jeter addressed the crowd, thanking them for their support over the years, and urging them to "take the memories of this field, add them to the new memories that will come at the new Yankee Stadium and continue to pass them on from generation to generation." [98] Despite multiple midseason roster moves, the team was hampered by injuries and missed the playoffs for the first time in 14 seasons.

The new Yankee Stadium opened in 2009 and was christened with a World Series victory in the same way that the original Yankee Stadium was christened with a World Series victory when it opened in 1923.

During the off-season, the Yankees retooled their roster with several star free agent acquisitions, including CC Sabathia, Mark Teixeira, and A. J. Burnett. At the beginning of the 2009 season, the Yankees opened the new Yankee Stadium, located just a block north on River Avenue from their former home. The Yankees set a major league record by playing error-free ball for 18 consecutive games from May 14 to June 1, 2009.[99] The Yankees finished first in the AL East. In the ALDS they swept the Minnesota Twins before defeating the Los Angeles Angels in the ALCS, 4–2. The Yankees defeated the Philadelphia Phillies, in the World Series 4–2, their 27th World Series title.[100]

The 2010 season featured the rivalry between the Yankees and Red Sox being revived to start and end the season. The Yankees and the Red Sox started and finished the season against each other at Fenway Park.[101][102] This was the first time since 1950 this had happened.[103] In June, Joe Torre's Dodgers played games against the Yankees for the first time since he became manager of the Dodgers, with the Yankees taking two out of three games in the series.[104] During the 2010 All-Star break, public address announcer Bob Sheppard and principal owner George Steinbrenner died. Eight days later, another longtime Yankee icon, former player and manager Ralph Houk, died. The Yankees won the American League Wild Card. They swept the Minnesota Twins in the 2010 American League Division Series, but lost to the Texas Rangers in the ALCS, 4–2.

In a 22–9 win over the Oakland Athletics on August 25, 2011, the Yankees became the first team in Major League history to hit three grand slams in a single game. They were hit by Robinson Canó, Russell

Martin, and Curtis Granderson. The Yankees won the AL East title, finishing with 97 wins and took home field throughout the AL postseason. However, they were defeated by the Tigers, 3–2, in the ALDS.

In 2012, the Yankees again finished the season with the AL's best record at 95–67. In mid-July, the Yankees traded two prospects to the Seattle Mariners for Ichiro Suzuki. They faced the Orioles in the ALDS. In Game 3, Raúl Ibañez became the oldest player to hit two home runs in a game, the oldest to hit a walk-off home run, the first substitute position player in a postseason game to hit two home runs, and the first to hit two home runs in the 9th inning or later in a postseason game, in the Yankees' 3–2 win. The Yankees defeated the Orioles in five games. However, in the ALCS, the Yankees lost to the Tigers again, this time in a four-game sweep, which was compounded with a struggling offense and a season-ending injury to Derek Jeter.

The 2013 season was riddled with injuries. Mark Teixeira strained his elbow during the World Baseball Classic prior to the start of the season and played only 15 games for the Yankees. Alex Rodriguez played only 44 games after a hip surgery, Jeter played only 17 games due to his ankle injury from the 2012 ALCS, and Curtis Granderson played only 61 games due to forearm and knuckle injuries. On April 12, 2013, the Yankees made their second triple play ever. It was scored as 4–6–5–6–5–3–4, the first triple play of its kind in baseball history.[105] On September 25, the Yankees lost to the Tampa Bay Rays, which for the second time in the wild card era, eliminated them from playoff contention.[106] They ended the season 85–77, finishing in 3rd place in the AL East.

During the 2013–14 off-season, the Yankees signed Brian McCann, Jacoby Ellsbury, Masahiro Tanaka, and Carlos Beltrán. Despite that, the Yankees missed the playoffs, finishing 2nd in the AL East with an 84–78 record. Rodriguez missed the entire season due to a 162-game suspension for his participation in the Biogenesis baseball scandal.[107] One notable moment happened on September 25, 2014, when Jeter – playing his final home game – hit a walk-off single off pitcher Evan Meek to defeat the Baltimore Orioles in front of 48,613 fans who came to see the captain for the last time.[108] Reliever Dellin Betances finished 3rd in voting for AL Rookie of the Year, while starting pitcher Masahiro Tanaka finished 5th.[109]

The Yankees would return to the playoffs in 2015. In his return from suspension, Rodriguez hit 33 home runs, his most since 2008, and tied Hank Aaron's record of fifteen 30-home-run seasons.[110] Teixeira hit 31 home runs before a hit-by-pitch ended his season in August. Rookie first baseman Greg Bird had an impressive showing in Teixeira's place, hitting 11 home runs in 46 games, while rookie starting pitcher Luis Severino went 5–3 with a 2.89 ERA in 62 1/3 innings after getting called up in August. Closer Andrew Miller won the AL Reliever of the Year Award.[111] The Yankees led the AL East for most of the year before being felled by a surging Toronto Blue Jays team, ending the season 87–75 and in 2nd place. They were defeated by the Houston Astros in the 2015 American League Wild Card Game.[112]

In the off-season, the Yankees traded for Cincinnati Reds' closer Aroldis Chapman after a domestic violence allegation lowered his value. Chapman was later suspended 30 games.[113] The Yankees started the 2016 season with a record of 9–17. The resurgent 2015 experienced by Rodriguez and Teixeira did not carry over, as they batted .200 and .204 for the season, respectively. Bird was ruled out for the season after undergoing shoulder surgery. Starting pitcher Michael Pineda struggled, going 6–12 with a 4.82 ERA, the 7th-highest in baseball. At the trade deadline, the Yankees stood at an uninspiring 52–52, and traded Chapman and Miller.

2017–present: Baby Bombers

Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge quickly became the new face of the team.

On July 25, 2016, the Yankees traded Aroldis Chapman to the Chicago Cubs for a group of players that included top shortstop prospect Gleyber Torres,[114] and traded Andrew Miller to the Cleveland Indians for prospects outfielder Clint Frazier and pitcher Justus Sheffield.[115] In addition, the Yankees traded 39-year-old designated hitter Carlos Beltran to the Texas Rangers for minor league prospects.[116] The Yankees' decision to be sellers, rather than buyers, at the trade deadline was unusual, given the Yankees' typical win-now approach. In discussing the midseason trades, Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said that the Yankees recognized the "need to look toward the future." [117]

In early August, both Teixeira and Rodriguez revealed their plans to retire by the season's end.[118][119] Rodriguez played his final game on August 12, 2016.[120] In his fourth-to-last game, Teixeira hit a walk-off grand slam against the Boston Red Sox, his 409th and last career home run.[121] The Yankees called up Tyler Austin and outfielder Aaron Judge in August. They made their debuts on August 13, hitting back-to-back home runs in their first career at-bats.[122] Catcher Gary Sánchez hit 20 home runs in 53 games, finishing 2nd in AL Rookie of the Year voting and setting the record at the time as the fastest to reach 20 career home runs.[123] Sanchez, Judge and Austin, as well as the Yankees' prosperous farm system in general, became nicknamed the "Baby Bombers".[124]

After having traded Chapman to the Cubs during the 2016 season, the Yankees signed him as a free agent during the 2016–17 off-season; Chapman agreed to a five-year, \$86 million contract, the most lucrative in history for a relief pitcher.[125] In 2017, the Yankees finished the season with a record of 91–71. They finished second in the AL East behind the Boston Red Sox, but captured the first AL Wild Card spot. Judge and Sánchez combined for 85 home runs. Sanchez finished with 33, the most by a Yankees catcher in a single season. Judge led the American League with 52 home runs, breaking Mark McGwire's major league record for most home runs by a rookie in a single season (McGwire hit 49 in 1987).[126] The Yankees starting pitching was led by ace Luis Severino, who rebounded from his last season to lead the Yankees' pitching staff. On July 1, Clint Frazier made his MLB debut where he went 2 for 4 with a home run.[127] The Yankees sent Dellin Betances, Starlin Castro, Sánchez, Severino, and

Judge to the 2017 Major League Baseball All-Star Game. Judge won the 2017 Home Run Derby, making the Yankees the team with the most players in history to win a Home Run Derby.[128]

After the 2017 All-Star break, the Yankees made a series of moves to acquire third baseman Todd Frazier, former Yankees reliever David Robertson, reliever Tommy Kahnle,[129] starter Sonny Gray, and starter Jaime Garcia. In the 2017 AL Wild Card Game the Yankees defeated the Minnesota Twins to move on the ALDS. In the ALDS, the Yankees lost the first two games to the Cleveland Indians before winning the final three games and taking the series.[130] They played the Houston Astros in the 2017 American League Championship Series and lost the series in seven games.[131][132]

In the 2017–18 off-season, the Yankees hired Aaron Boone to succeed Girardi as their new manager.[133][134] The Yankees traded Starlin Castro and prospects Jorge Guzman and Jose Devers to the Miami Marlins for reigning National League Most Valuable Player Giancarlo Stanton.[135] A right fielder who bats right-handed, Stanton hit 59 home runs and drove in 132 runs—both major league highs—in 2017;[136] his contract was the largest player contract in the history of professional sports in North America at the time.[137] The Yankees also traded third baseman Chase Headley and pitcher Bryan Mitchell to the San Diego Padres for outfielder Jabari Blash; following the move, Yankees GM Brian Cashman stated that the trade "create[d] payroll flexibility".[138] On September 29, 2018 Gleyber Torres hit the Yankees 265th home run of the season which broke the record of the most home runs in a season, previously held by the 1997 Seattle Mariners. The Yankees ended the 2018 season with 267 home runs as well as a record of 100–62. In the 2018 playoffs, the Yankees defeated the Oakland Athletics in the Wild Card game, advancing to face the 108-win Red Sox in the ALDS. The Yankees fell to the Red Sox in the ALDS 3–1. In Game 3, the Yankees suffered their worst playoff defeat in team history, by a score of 16–1.[139]

On June 25, 2019, the Yankees broke the record for the most home runs in consecutive games against the Toronto Blue Jays.[140] On September 27, the Yankees became the second team to reach 300 homers in a season, achieved by their ALDS opponent, the Minnesota Twins, a day earlier. The Yankees ended the 2019 season with a record of 103–59, winning the AL East division title for the first time since 2012. [141] The Yankees beat the Twins in a three-game sweep to advance to the ALCS for the second time in three seasons.[142] However, on October 19, the Houston Astros beat the Yankees in the ALCS 4–2.[143] With this loss, the 2010s decade became the first since the 1980s to have the Yankees fail to win a World Series and the first since the 1910s to have the Yankees failing to play in one.[144]

During the 2019 offseason, on December 18, 2019, the Yankees signed Gerrit Cole to a nine-year, \$324 million contract.[145][146]

On August 28, 2020, the Yankees gave up a walk-off home run to Amed Rosario of the Mets in Yankee Stadium. The Mets were the home team because they were making up for a previously cancelled game.

It was the first time a visiting player had hit a walk-off home run since Ed McKean hit one for the St. Louis Perfectos against the Cleveland Spiders in 1899.[147] The Yankees finished the shortened 2020 season with a record of 33–27, finishing second in AL East. In the first round of the playoffs they swept the Cleveland Indians beating them in 2 games in the wild card series. In the ALDS, however, the Yankees were defeated by the Tampa Bay Rays in five games, marking four consecutive playoff exits.

Distinctions

World Series rings

See also: List of New York Yankees seasons and New York Yankees award winners and league leaders

The Yankees have won a record 27 World Series in 40 appearances (which, since the first World Series in 1903, currently amounts to an average appearance every 2.7 seasons and a championship every 4.0 seasons); the St. Louis Cardinals are in second place with 11 World Series championships. The Yankees' number of World Series losses, 13, is also an MLB record. The Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers are second in total World Series appearances with 20. The Yankees have faced the Dodgers 11 times, going 8–3.[148] Among North American major sports, the Yankees' success is approached only by the 24 Stanley Cup championships of the Montreal Canadiens of the National Hockey League. The Yankees have played in the World Series against every National League pennant winner except the Houston Astros and the Colorado Rockies.[149]

Through 2018, the Yankees have an all-time regular season winning percentage of .569 (a 10,275 – 7,781 record), the best of any team in MLB history.[150]

On June 25, 2019, they set a new major league record for homering in 28 consecutive games, breaking the record set by the 2002 Texas Rangers.[151]

With the walk-off solo home run by DJ LeMahieu to win the game against the Oakland Athletics on August 31, 2019, the Yankees ended the month of August that year now holding a new record of 74 home runs hit in the month alone, a new record for the most home runs hit in a month by a single MLB team.[152][153]

Sourced from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Yankees